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Reconsidering the ornamental mosaics of the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia

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RECONSIDERING THE ORNAMENTAL MOSAICS OF THE MAUSOLEUM OF GALLA PLACIDIA

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ABSTRACT

RECONSIDERING THE ORNAMENTAL MOSAICS OF THE MAUSOLEUM OF GALLA PLACIDIA

by Regina Maria Ursula Kammer

This thesis takes the position that by critically reviewing the ornamental and decorative mosaics of the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia (Ravenna, Italy) and analyzing their motifs in depth, one can extract meaning and an indication of patron and function.

Iconographical meaning can be applied to the ornamental mosaics in the context of the figural mosaics. Additionally, meaning can be extracted from the ornamental mosaics in light of their placement in mosaic history and their commonalties with textile ornament. The ornamental mosaics have funerary, salvational, Apocalyptic, and imperial meanings.

In scholarship, "Mausoleum of Galla Placidia" is usually prefaced with the phrase "so-called" due to the lack of information regarding the identity of the patron and original function of the building. The ornamental mosaics support the theory of Galla Placidia as patron, and support the theory of the structure as an imperial mausoleum.

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All photographs were taken by Jason Munkres. All interior photographs of the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia were taken with permission granted by the Opera di Religione della Diocesi di Ravenna and the Diocese di Ravenna-Cervia.

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Introduction, Historical Background, and Literature Review

> Whatever the original dedication and purpose of the building, its mosaics defy description for their glowing beauty.... Inside in the soft light of the modern alabaster windows it is a veritable jewel box of colored mosaics which impress even those insensitive to art.[1]

Stewart Irvin Oost's reaction to the interior decoration of the so-called Mausoleum of Galla Placidia is the standard response by scholars and tourists alike upon entering the fifth-century monument in Ravenna, Italy (fig. 1). Surely the mosaics of the Mausoleum are beautiful. They are particularly striking because of their extensive use of ornamental patterns. However, these seemingly purely ornamental mosaics have received relatively little scholarly analysis. Their presence is explained as enhancing the figural motifs in a proto-Byzantine style, or they are dismissed by scholars as merely lovely.

What has been explained at great length is the iconography of the figural mosaics in this small cruciform structure. These include: the Good Shepherd and St. Lawrence lunettes, the lunettes of the drinking stags, the little prophets in the east and west barrel vaults, the eight apostles in the upper lunettes and the drinking doves at their feet, and the Apocalyptic Beasts in the starry heaven.

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[1] Stewart Irvin Oost, *Galla Placidia Augusta: a Biographical Essay* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), 276-277.

Only the ornamental mosaics of the north and south barrel vaults have received attention from art historians because of their striking pattern which is presumed to be without precedent in the art of mosaics. Often, a connection to textiles is drawn, such as André Grabar's description of them as "a richly glowing tapestry,"[2] or Giuseppe Bovini's "oriental carpet...sprinkled with...flowers."[3] However, this parallel with textiles is never fully explored, and rarely continues beyond the north and south vaults. This leaves the reader wondering if these descriptive phrases are 20th-century interpretations or if there really was a connection between the two arts in the fifth century.

This paper takes the position that the ornamental and decorative mosaics throughout the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia are more than just beautiful, and by reviewing these mosaics more critically and analyzing their motifs in depth, one can extract iconographical meaning and provide a clearer indication of patron and function.

A review of the history of the Mausoleum and its architecture will be followed by a discussion of the accepted iconography of its figural and emblematic mosaics. Next will be a discussion of sources for the decorative motifs. These motifs will be viewed in terms of their placement in the history of the art of mosaics and the mosaics of the Late Antique era. Given that the language of textiles is often evoked in descriptions of the Mausoleum, there will

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[2] André Grabar, *Byzantine Painting: Historical and Critical Study* (Geneva: Skira, 1953), 55.
[3] Giuseppe Bovini, *Ravenna Mosaics* (Greenwich, Conn.: New York Graphic Society, 1956; Oxford: Phaidon Press, 1978), 10.

be an exploration of similarities with textile ornament, examining motifs and patterns which are common to textiles and mosaics of the fifth century C.E.

Next there will be a discussion of the iconographical meaning that can be applied to the ornamental mosaics in the context of the figural mosaics, as well as meaning that can be extracted from the ornamental mosaics in light of their placement in mosaic history and their commonalties with textile ornament. It will be shown that the ornamental mosaics have funerary, salvational, Apocalyptic, and imperial meanings that enhance the rest of the mosaic program.

When discussing the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia scholars preface the name with the phrase "so-called" because of the lack of reliable information regarding the identity of the patron and original function of the building. This paper will show that the ornamental mosaics support the theory of Galla Placidia as patron, and support the theory of the structure as an imperial mausoleum.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: THE LATE ANTIQUE ERA

In its broadest sense, "Late Antique" means the period from the Diocletian reforms of the 290s to the Islamic conquest of the Near East in the 640s[4], but some scholars use the term to describe the period from Constantine (c. 330, the

[4] James Lionel Trilling, "The Roman Heritage: Textiles from Egypt and the Eastern Mediterranean 300-600 A.D.," *Textile Museum Journal* 21 (1982): 11-12. However "late antiquity" has also been defined as liberally as 250 to 800. See *Late Antiquity: a Guide to the Postclassical World* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999), ix.

end of the Early Christian period) to Justinian (c. 520, the beginning of the Byzantine period).[5] Whatever the precise beginning and ending dates, this period in Europe is generally characterized by great change: the movements of entire ethnic populations across the continent, the dominance of Christianity over paganism, the "fall" of the western Roman Empire and the rise of the eastern Byzantine Empire, and the segmentation of Europe into areas which later became modern nation states.

In art, as well, the Late Antique is a period of change. The change is especially reflected in representational art, where there was a shift from the naturalism and illusionism of the dominant Hellenistic aesthetic to the more iconic and abstract nature of Byzantine art. Many early 20th-century historians viewed this period as one of artistic decline.

Another important change in art was the increase in the use of ornament. Byzantine art, Migration art, Celtic art, and Islamic art are all known for their profuse use of ornament and decoration. However, despite examples such as the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia, Roman art during the Late Antique is generally not considered part of this trend toward ornamentalism. Because earlier Roman art was known for its realism of human forms, later Roman art is usually compared along this spectrum of illusionism and naturalism. The ornamental patterns of late Roman art are not considered a new trend, but instead indicative

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[5] See especially Ernst Kitzinger, *Byzantine Art in the Making: Main Lines of Stylistic Development in Mediterranean Art, 3rd-7th Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980), 1. For a discussion of beginning and ending dates for the Late Antique period in the eastern Roman

of the "decline" of naturalism.[6] In the course of discussions, this paper will show that the Mausoleum, rather than displaying degenerate forms and motifs, exhibited new trends in Late Antique fashion, style, and iconography.

LITERATURE REVIEW: THE MAUSOLEUM OF GALLA PLACIDIA

Serious scholarship on the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia only began in the late-19th and early-20th centuries during a series of excavations and restorations sponsored by the Italian government. In 1898, the newly formed Italian Superintendency of Monuments, under its leader Corrado Ricci, began extensive renovations of the Mausoleum with complete attention paid to historical accuracy. It is Ricci's published works, and those of his colleagues, especially Giuseppe Gerola, that have been the foundation for later historians.[7]

When discussing the mosaics of the Mausoleum, Ricci himself, and scholars of the early and mid-20th century, concentrated on the figural elements and their Christian meanings. Extensive attention was paid to the lunettes of the Good Shepherd and of St. Lawrence. Other figural elements are singled out and explained in a biblical context. These earlier authors tended to give the decorative mosaics no more than simple description along with praise.

Empire see Annemarie Stauffer, *Textiles of Late Antiquity* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1995), 5-6.

[6] See the discussion on interlace patterns in textiles in Trilling, "The Roman Heritage," 104.

[7] The complete report is *Il Mausoleo de Galla Placidia in Ravenna* (Rome: E. Calzone Editore, 1914). A portion of this book was reprinted as Corrado Ricci, "Il sepolcro di Galla Placidia in Ravenna," *Bollettino d'arte del Ministero della pubblica istruzione* (1914): 141-174.

The two dominant scholars in the analysis of the Mausoleum and indeed all of the monuments of Ravenna are Giuseppe Bovini and Friedrich Wilhelm Deichmann. The analysis of the mosaic program found in Bovini's work *Il cosiddetto Mausoleo di Galla Placidia in Ravenna* (1950) has become the standard with which most scholars begin.[8] Deichmann's multi-volume work, *Ravenna: Hauptstadt des spätantiken Abendlandes* (1958-1989), is impressive in its comprehensiveness.[9] His emphasis was on architecture, but he discussed the mosaic decoration of the Ravenna monuments as well. For the Mausoleum he concentrated on the figural mosaics and discussed their iconography at great length using Bovini and Ricci as his guides. Deichmann was an architectural specialist so his analysis of the mosaics is not as detailed as one might want. He concentrated on the figural mosaics and gave cursory attention to the decorative elements. Despite this, his work is so important to the history of Ravenna monuments because of its thoroughness that it is his analysis of the mosaics that has become accepted. However, he did not cover all the mosaic patterns found in the Mausoleum.

Recent scholarship on the Mausoleum has been less than one might expect for such a famous monument, probably because of the extensive and seemingly complete work done by Bovini and Deichmann. In keeping with

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[8] Giuseppe Bovini, *Il cosiddetto Mausoleo di Galla Placidia in Ravenna*, Collezione "Amici delle catacombe" 13 (Vatican City: Societa Amici [delle] Catacombe presso Pontificio Istituto di Archeologia Cristiana, 1950).

[9] *Ravenna: Hauptstadt des spätantiken Abendlandes*, vol. 1, *Geschichte und Monumente* (1969), vol. 2, no. 1, *Kommentar* (1974), vol. 2, no. 2, *Kommentar* (1976), vol. 2, no. 3, *Kommentar:*

current postmodern trends in art history, contemporary works have concentrated on individual elements and specific features of the Mausoleum and not the decorative program as a whole. The so-called St. Lawrence lunette has received much attention. William Seston suggested that the figure in this lunette is the Apocalyptic Christ holding the Book of Judgment standing next to the altar of holocausts upon which sinners will be immolated.[10] Starleen Kay Meyer in her master's thesis reinterprets the function of the Mausoleum based on a rereading of this lunette. She believes St. Lawrence's status as deacon and the building's physical position with regard to the neighboring church of Santa Croce reveal the Mausoleum to be a diakonicon.[11] Gillian Vallance Mackie suggests that the figure in the lunette is not St. Lawrence at all but the Spanish martyr St. Vincent of Saragossa, and the Mausoleum was meant to be a monument to Galla Placidia's first born who died in infancy in Spain.[12]

Since the 1980s and 1990s, several scholars have used the Mausoleum as a backdrop to explore the relationship between mosaics and textiles. Clementina Rizzardi, Raffaella Farioli Campanati, and Anna Gonosová all take up the idea briefly expressed by most earlier scholars about the similarity of the north and south barrel vaults to patterns found on textiles.[13] These scholars

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Geschichte, Topographie, Kunst, und Kultur (1989), *Kommentar, Plananhang* (1976), vol. 3, *Fruhchristliche Bauten und Mosaiken von Ravenna* (1989) (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner).

[10] William Seston, "Le jugement dernier au Mausolée de Galla Placidia," *Cahiers archéologiques* 1 (1945): 37-50.

[11] Meyer, "The So-called Mausoleum of Galla Placidia," e.g. at 41 and 95.

[12] Mackie, "The Early Medieval Chapel," 173-183.

[13] Clementina Rizzardi, "Motivi sassanidi nell'arte di Ravenna del V e VI secolo," *Corso di cultura sull'arte ravennate e bizantina* 38 (1991): 367-385; Raffaella Farioli Campanati, "Decorazioni di

were the first to treat the decorative mosaics of the Mausoleum as more than mere decoration and to put them in an art-historical perspective.

LITERATURE REVIEW: MOSAICS

Many scholars in the field of mosaics tend to specialize geographically, then by time period. For example, Marion E. Blake is the standard source for Italian mosaics from the Republic to the Late Empire.[14] Janine Balty is a good source for Near Eastern mosaics.[15] Katherine M. D. Dunbabin specializes in North African mosaics, but has also written an excellent general text on the history of Greek and Roman mosaics.[16]

One of the giants in the field of Late Antique mosaics was Doro Levi. Levi, along with Princeton scholar of Early Christian art, Charles Rufus Morey, was a member of the team which excavated the ancient city of Antioch during the 1930s.[17] Levi's goal was to establish a chronology of style for the pavement mosaics found there which date from the second to the sixth century C.E. To this

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origine tessile nel repertorio del mosaico pavimentale protobizantino del Vicino Oriente e le corrispondenze decorative parietali di Ravenna, Salonicco, Costantinopoli e Qusayr 'Amra," *Corso di cultura sull'arte ravennate e bizantina* 39 (1992): 275-295; Anna Gonosová, "The formation and sources of early Byzantine floral semis and floral diaper patterns reexamined," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, no. 41 (1987): 227-237.

[14] Relevant for this paper is: Marion Elizabeth Blake, "Mosaics of the Late Empire in Rome and Vicinity," *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome* 17 (1940): 81-130.

[15] Janine Balty, *Mosaïques antiques de Syrie* (Brussels: Centre belge de recherches archéologiques à Apamée de Syrie, 1977); *Mosaïques antiques du Proche-Orient: chronologie, iconographie, interprétation* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1995); *Mosaïques d'Apamée* (Brussels: Musées royaux d'art et d'histoire, 1986).

[16] Katherine M. D. Dunbabin, *The Mosaics of Roman North Africa: Studies in Iconography and Patronage*, Oxford Monographs on Classical Archaeology (Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 1978), and Katherine M. D. Dunbabin, *Mosaics of the Greek and Roman World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

[17] Doro Levi, *Antioch Mosaic Pavements* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1947).

end he found it easiest to look at ornamental motifs, a fact which gave these motifs importance at a time when they were usually passed over. However, Levi's analysis did not extend to any potential meaning or iconography attributable to the ornamentation.

Levi's work inspired later scholars to take up the idea of cataloging ornamental mosaic motifs from other periods and places. Asher Ovadiah concentrated on geometrical and floral patterns of pavement mosaics from the fourth to first centuries B.C.E., and explored the origins of these motifs.[18] A group of scholars led by Catherine Balmelle has attempted to create a standard nomenclature for geometrical ornamental motifs in mosaics from the first century B.C.E. to the sixth century C.E.[19]

LITERATURE REVIEW: TEXTILES

Late Antique textiles have been the subject of scholarly works since the late-19th century. These works were usually done in conjunction with major museum acquisitions of so-called Coptic textiles from Egyptian excavations, usually taking form of catalogs.[20] However, early writers tend to be imprecise with regards to dating and manufacture, making it difficult to observe stylistic

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[18] Asher Ovadiah, *Geometric and Floral Patterns in Ancient Mosaics: a Study of Their Origin in the Mosaics from the Classical Period to the Age of Augustus* (Rome: "L-Erma" di Bretschneider, 1980).
[19] Catherine Balmelle, et al., *Le Décor géométrique de la mosaïque romaine: répertoire graphique et descriptif des compositions linéaires et isotropes* (Paris: Picard, 1985).
[20] For example see A. F. Kendrick, *Catalogue of Textiles from Burying-Grounds in Egypt* (London: H. M. Stationery Office, 1920-1922) a catalog of the collections at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, and W.F. Volbach and O. Wulff, *Spätantike und Koptische Stoffe aus Agyptischen*

trends. Only in recent decades has there been systematic analysis to establish stylistic and technical chronologies.[21] While some scholarship in textiles remains affiliated with museum collections and major exhibitions, there are independent offerings of note. James Trilling has written critically on both Coptic and Byzantine textiles.[22] Diane Lee Carroll has written on ancient Greek as well as Coptic textiles.[23] Anna Muthesius has published studies on the Byzantine textile industry and technical aspects of Byzantine silks.[24]

Postmodernist analysis has also had an impact on the field of textiles. Considered as a "decorative art" and not a "fine art," textiles had not been subjected to rigorous iconographic analysis unless a scene had a counterpart in painting. Now scholars such as Henry Maguire[25] and Mary Margaret Fulghum[26] are looking at textiles and their meanings within their own contexts.

Grabfunden, in den Staatlichen museen, Kaiser-Friedrich-museum, Agyptisches museum, Schliemann-sammlung (Berlin: E. Wasmuth, 1926).

[21] See John Beckwith's criticism of the field in his "Coptic Textiles," *Ciba Review* 12, no. 133 (August 1959): 2-20.

[22] James Lionel Trilling, "The Roman Heritage: Textiles from Egypt and the Eastern Mediterranean 300-600 A.D.," *Textile Museum Journal* 21 (1982): 1-112, and *The Medallion Style: a Study in the Origins of Byzantine Taste* (New York: Garland, 1985).

[23] Diane Lee Carroll, "Patterned Textiles in Greek Art : a Study of Their Designs in Relationship to Real Textiles and to Local and Period Styles" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 1965), and *Looms and Textiles of the Copts: First Millennium Egyptian Textiles in the Carl Austin Rietz Collection of the California Academy of Sciences* (San Francisco: California Academy of Sciences, 1988).

[24] Anna Muthesius, *Byzantine Silk Weaving: AD 400 to AD 1200* (Vienna: Fassbaender, 1997).

[25] Henry Maguire, "Garments Pleasing to God: the Significance of Domestic Textile Designs in the Early Byzantine Period," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 44 (1990): 215-224.

[26] Mary Margaret Fulghum, "Under Wraps: Byzantine Textiles As Major And Minor Arts," *Studies in the Decorative Arts* 9, no. 1 (fall/winter 2001-2002): 13-33.

CHAPTER 2

The History, Architecture, and Mosaic Program of the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The earliest written source for the attribution of the Mausoleum is Andreas Agnellus, a local priest of Ravenna who, in the early 9th century, wrote *Liber pontificalis ecclesiae Ravennatis*[1] accounts of imperial building campaigns and the accomplishments of the bishops of Ravenna. The main source of Agnellus' information was building inscriptions. However, in the case of the Mausoleum, he did not quote or refer to an inscription. Agnellus attributed the building and decoration of the church of Santa Croce, to which the Mausoleum was attached, to Galla Placidia, the de facto ruler of the western Roman Empire during the regency of her son Valentinian from 425 to 438. There was also epigraphical evidence for her patronage of the cruciform chapel of San Zaccharias which was located at the north end of the narthex of Santa Croce. The Mausoleum, located at the south end of the narthex of Santa Croce, apparently mirrored the position and shape of San Zaccharias.

The identification of the Mausoleum as a funerary structure goes back at

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[1] See Joaquin Martinez Pizarro, *Writing Ravenna: the Liber pontificalis of Andreas Agnellus* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995), 2, who states "the only complete scholarly edition of the LPR available today is that of Oswald Holder-Egger, published in 1878 by the Monumenta Germaniae Historica." An incomplete version of the Agnellus' work is often cited: Alessandro Testi Rasponi, *Codex pontificalis ecclesiae Ravennatis* (Bologna: N. Zanichelli, 1924).

least to the seventh century when sarcophagi were added to the structure.[2] Agnellus identified one of the occupants as Galla Placidia herself but qualified his statement with the phrase *ut aiunt multi*,[3] which means "as many say," probably indicating he was relying on popular tradition. There is no evidence that Galla Placidia herself was buried at Ravenna; in fact, she died in Rome on November 27, 450, and was most likely buried in the Theodosian family mausoleum attached to old St. Peter's in the Vatican.[4]

Agnellus referred to the Mausoleum as the *monasterio Sancti Nazari*, and from at least the mid-12th to the 15th century there is mention of a *monasterium Sancti Nazarii* or *monasterium Sanctorum Nazarii et Celsi* which is associated with Santa Croce and the patronage of Galla Placidia. By *monasterium* Agnellus meant a building founded by monks, which included martyrs' chapels,[5] so this name indicated a chapel dedicated to the Milanese martyrs St. Nazarius and St. Celsus. Most scholars believe this is the dedication the Mausoleum received

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[2] Starleen Kay Meyer, "The So-called Mausoleum of Galla Placidia" (master's thesis, University of California, Riverside, 1983), 37 referring to Corrado Ricci (1914); although Clementina Rizzardi ("L'architettura del Mausoleo tra Oriente e Occidente: cosmopolitismo e autonomia" "The Mausoleum's Architecture Between East and West: Cosmopolitanism and Autonomy), in Clementina Rizzardi, ed. *Il Mausoleo de Galla Placidia a Ravenna* (Modena: F.C. Panini, 1996), 134-135) and Giuseppe Bovini (*Églises de Ravenne* (Novara: Istituto geografico De Agostini, 1960), 11) say that St. (i.e., Bishop) Rinaldo da Concorreggio in the 14th century is the first to mention the sarcophagi. The three sarcophagi currently in the Mausoleum date from the fifth century.

[3] See Oost, 276, note 90, and Rizzardi, "L'architettura del Mausoleo tra Oriente e Occidente," 133: "Sepulta est Galla Placidia in monasterio Sancti Nazari, ut aiunt multi, ante altarium infra cancellos quos fuerunt aenei, qui nunc lapidei esse videtur."

[4] Various sources, see: Oost, 291-292; Rizzardi, "L'architettura del Mausoleo tra Oriente e Occidente," 134; Bovini, *Églises de Ravenne*, 7.

[5] Gillian Vallance Mackie, "The Early Medieval Chapel: Decoration, Form, and Function. A Study of Chapels in Italy and Istria in the Period between 313 and 741 AD (Ravenna, Milan, Rome)" (Ph.D. diss., University Of Victoria (Canada), 1991), 4-5. Mackie says that *monasterium* is a

during the late middle ages.[6] There are earlier medieval documents which refer to a *monasterium Sancti Laurentii Formosi in regione Sancti Vitalis*, i.e. "a chapel of St. Lawrence in the region of San Vitale."[7] This suggests the original fifth-century dedication of the Mausoleum was to St. Lawrence, who is depicted in a lunette mosaic.[8]

At some point during her time in Ravenna Galla Placidia sponsored the building and decoration of the church of Santa Croce. It is possible that she built Santa Croce during her first stay in Ravenna, from 416 to 421.[9] Excavations of Santa Croce and the area, undertaken since the 1960s, have revealed it to have been a sepulchre, instead of a palace church as was previously believed. Archaeological evidence, such as types of materials and joinery, shows that the Mausoleum was built after the construction of Santa Croce.[10] To accommodate the Mausoleum the wall on the south side of the narthex was broken through and steps were added going up to the Mausoleum.

The Mausoleum was separated from Santa Croce in 1602, when the narthex of the church was demolished and the façade moved back seven meters

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word used by Agnellus in particular, and that his use of the term to indicate a small chapel probably developed out of the fifth-century practice of monks caring for martyr's *memoria*.

[6] Rizzardi, "L'architettura del Mausoleo tra Oriente e Occidente," 133-134.

[7] Bovini, *Ravenna Mosaics*, 7-8; also Oost, 277, but Oost thinks this Laurentine chapel could date from the reign of Honorius who died in 423; most scholars would consider a date prior to 423 as a little too early for the Mausoleum; see below.

[8] Rizzardi, "L'architettura del Mausoleo tra Oriente e Occidente," 144, note 31, gives a list of scholars who believe original dedication was to St. Lawrence: Gerola (1912), Testi Rasponi (1925), Bovini (1950), Lazarev (1967), Deichmann (1974), Farioli (1977).

[9] Rizzardi, "L'architettura del Mausoleo tra Oriente e Occidente," 130.

[10] *Ibid.*, 133: the bricks of the Mausoleum are thicker than those of Santa Croce, mortar mixtures are different, and dovetail joints at the narthex reveal a later construction.

to make way for the street which today bears Galla Placidia's name.[11] Over time the Mausoleum became more physically affiliated with the monastery at San Vitale, and at one point served as an out-building to the kitchen garden between the two monuments.[12] It is this disassociation with Santa Croce that has probably led to the confusion regarding the function of the so-called Mausoleum of Galla Placidia. The tombs discovered at Santa Croce indicate that it was either a funerary church or martyrs' memoria, so it is probably safe to assume that the purpose of the Mausoleum was also funerary in nature. However, based on the archaeological evidence, it is still unclear if the small building was meant to be a mausoleum, a private funerary chapel, or to serve some other function.

Most scholars attribute the patronage of the Mausoleum to Galla Placidia, despite the sketchy evidence. The Mausoleum is within the former imperial precinct of Ravenna, which indicates that it had imperial patronage.[13] The only other likely candidate is Galla Placidia's son, Valentinian III (born 419, assassinated 455), for whom she acted as regent from 425 to 438. Scholars who attribute the patronage of the Mausoleum to Valentinian include the 20th-century biographer of Galla Placidia, Stewart Irvin Oost.[14] Oost believes that Valentinian

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[11] *Ibid.*, 129.
[12] Anna Maria Iannucci "Il mausoleo ritrovato: dagli adattamenti settecenteschi ai progetti e restauri tra Ottocento e Novecento" (The Mausoleum Rediscovered: From Eighteenth-century Modifications to Late-Nineteenth and Twentieth-century Projects and Restorations), in Rizzardi, ed. *Il Mausoleo*, 171.
[13] Mackie, "The Early Medieval Chapel," 151; Oost, 272.
[14] Others include W. Sas. Zaloziecky, "L'Importanza della decorazione musiva nell'architettura Ravennate e il suo posto nella pittura tardo romana," *Felix Ravenna*, third series, fasc. 1, 52 (March 1950): 14-15; and Meyer, "The So-called Mausoleum of Galla Placidia," 100.

was particularly devoted to St. Lawrence and gave "impressive gifts" to the saint's tomb-shrine located in Rome. There is also epigraphical evidence, albeit tenuous, for Valentinian's dedication of a shrine to St. Lawrence in Ravenna, however, this shrine could have been built at the time of the western Roman Emperor Honorius (c. 400-423).[15] Additionally, the contemporary sources for Galla Placidia's life, Olympiodorus' *History* (which survives only in excerpts in Photius' *Biblioteca*) and Sozomen and Zosimus who drew from Olympiodorus, do not specifically mention the Mausoleum.[16] However, Galla Placidia had a preference for Ravenna and lived there probably continuously from 425 to 450, during which time she was engaged in a building campaign. Valentinian, especially after assuming the throne in 438, spent much of his time in Rome, and may not have even left Rome after 450.[17]

The proposed date of the Mausoleum varies from scholar to scholar, and sometimes depends on who the presumed patron is. The earliest believed date is 400-410, in which case the patron would not have been Galla Placidia, but instead the Emperor Honorius. Some place the building between 417-421, which is the period of Galla Placidia's first residency in Ravenna. The majority of scholars place the building slightly later, after 440, during Galla Placidia's second residency in Ravenna. Scholars who come down on the side of Valentinian give

[15] Oost, 277; source is *ILS*, 816 "an inscription whose provenance is lost." See also Meyer, "The So-called Mausoleum of Galla Placidia," 99.
[16] Mackie, "The Early Medieval Chapel," 155.
[17] Oost, 293-310.

the date as later, between 450 and 455. F. W. Deichmann provides a compromise by giving the date as the first half of the fifth century.[18]

THE ARCHITECTURE

The architecture of the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia, i.e., the shape and position of the building, provides clues to the function of the building, as well as to geographic and artistic models and sources. Now separated from the Church of Santa Croce, the Mausoleum was once attached to the south end of its narthex (fig. 2). Additionally, the floor of the Mausoleum was once about 1.5 meters lower, but over the centuries has risen due to subsidence, a problem throughout Ravenna.[19] The earth surrounding Santa Croce is currently undergoing extensive excavations. The difference in floor levels of the two structures as seen today is very dramatic. This, combined with their physical separation by a road and a wall, makes imagining the structures as they once were in the fifth century very difficult.

Santa Croce ("Holy Cross"), a cruciform plan church, is often connected to eastern architecture because it had certain elements that are not typically

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[18] For example see list provided in Rizzardi, "L'architettura del Mausoleo tra Oriente e Occidente," 143, note 8: Testi Rasponi (1915) and Farioli (1977) say c. 400-410; Ricci (1914), Bovini (1952), de Francovich (1952), Cortesi (1978), say c. 417-421; Mackie, "The Early Medieval Chapel," 159-160 agrees with the c. 417-421 date; W. Seston, "Le jugement dernier au Mausolée de Galla Placidia," *Cahiers archéologiques* 1 (1945): 37, gives a later date of c. 445.

[19] There is currently a section of floor near the entrance that has been excavated down to its original depth; see Anna Maria Iannucci "Il mausoleo ritrovato: dagli adattamenti settecenteschi ai progetti e restauri tra Ottocento e Novecento" (The Mausoleum Rediscovered: From Eighteenth-century Modifications to Late-Nineteenth and Twentieth-century Projects and Restorations), in

associated with western church forms. These include a bema, solea, synthronon, and pastophria.[20] Additionally, Janet Charlotte Smith has pointed out that the two small chambers plus courtyard at the northeast corner of the church mirror a similar and quite distinctive arrangement of rooms found at the Holy Sepulchre complex in Jerusalem. She suggests that this was a deliberate attempt by Galla Placidia to recreate the famous shrine in the east.[21] The cruciform plan itself is believed by some to have originated in the east, specifically in Armenia.[22] The fourth-century Constantinian church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople was the first imperial foundation in the cruciform plan and possibly served as a prototype.

However, the architectural precedents for Santa Croce, and the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia which also follows the cruciform plan, should not be seen as a stylistic debate involving eastern vs. western forms and influences. The cruciform plan was used for church buildings not because of eastern imposition of an eastern form, but because it followed the form of the symbol of the Christian religion. The cross in turn became the symbol of the imperially-

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Clementina Rizzardi, ed. *Il Mausoleo de Galla Placidia a Ravenna* (Modena: F.C. Panini, 1996), 171-206.

[20] Clementina Rizzardi, "L'architettura del Mausoleo tra Oriente e Occidente: cosmopolitismo e autonomia" (The Mausoleum's Architecture Between East and West: Cosmopolitanism and Autonomy), in Rizzardi, ed. *Il Mausoleo*, 132.

[21] Janet Charlotte Smith, "Form and Function of the Side Chambers of Fifth- and Sixth-century Churches in Ravenna," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 49, no. 2 (June 1990): 193-195.

[22] V. I. Atroshenko and Judith Collins, *The Origins of the Romanesque: Near Eastern Influences on European art, 4th-12th centuries* (Woodstock, NY: Overlook Press, 1985), 23.

sponsored Orthodox Church.[23] The cruciform plan was used all over the empire, in the east and west, and usually indicated an Orthodox foundation. Hence, the shape had political implications that far outweighed any aesthetic concerns.[24] In fact it was the western bishop Ambrose of Milan (374-397) who supplied the ideological statement in support of the cruciform plan: *Forma crucis templum est, templum victoria Christi, sacra triumphalis signat imago locum* – "The temple is in the form of the cross, the temple of the victorious Christ; this sacred triumphal sign marks the place."[25] St. Ambrose acted as a mentor for Galla Placidia when she was a young woman.

The cruciform plan was also the usual form for martyria, mausolea, and funerary chapels in the Late Antique era, following the lead of imperial funerary structures of Constantinople.[26] Given the context of its association with the funerary church of Santa Croce, the Mausoleum could have served any of those functions.

The plan of the Mausoleum is a Latin cross (one cross arm is longer than the other) rather than a Greek cross (both cross arms of equal length), although

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[23] Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire after the conversion of Constantine and the subsequent Edict of Milan of 313.

[24] Rizzardi, "L'architettura del Mausoleo tra Oriente e Occidente," 131. Rizzardi used Deichmann as her source, *Ravenna: Hauptstadt des spätantiken Abendlandes*, vol. 1, *Geschichte und Monumente* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1969), 160.

[25] This quote appears in various sources. I have supplied the translation based on the following sources: Rizzardi, "L'architettura del Mausoleo tra Oriente e Occidente," 132; Starleen Kay Meyer, "The So-called Mausoleum of Galla Placidia" (master's thesis, University of California, Riverside, 1983), 32, and 108 note 37; Giuseppe Bovini, *Ravenna Mosaics* (Oxford: Phaidon Press, 1978, c1957), 8.

[26] For the shape of martyria see the discussion of André Grabar's work on this subject in John Bryan Ward-Perkins, "Memoria, Martyr's Tomb, and Martyr's Church," *Journal of Theological Studies* 17 (1966): 25, 30-31.

this is rather subtle. The exterior is of plain brick. The entrance façade was originally sheathed in white marble[27] and would have been approached from the interior of the narthex of Santa Croce where a two-columned portico preceded it.

THE MOSAICS: DESCRIPTION

The interior of the Mausoleum is small and dimly lit (fig. 1). The mosaics balance this with a burst of color and pattern typical of Late Antique decoration. The rich ornamentation blankets the upper walls of the interior, with different patterns defining architectural features and framing planes. Each arm of the cruciform building is a barrel vault with a lunette at the end, a feature that can also be found in the third-century Roman catacombs. Each lunette, except the one over the entrance, has an inset window filled with modern alabaster. The center of the Mausoleum has four upper lunettes, larger than those found below. The whole interior is capped by a dome on pendentives.

The elaborateness of the interior ornamentation seems to expand the space within the small structure; this is promoted by the extensive use of dark blue which recedes behind the lighter-colored decorations. Despite the busy quality of the interior, there is a symmetry within the whole scheme. Overall

[27] Bovini, *Ravenna Mosaics*, 8; Deichmann, *Ravenna*, vol. 2, *Kommentar*, part 1 (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1974), 68.

there is a play between two-dimensional patterns and three-dimensional scenes, a feature of mosaic arts in general.[28]

One enters the Mausoleum on the north side. Over the entrance is the lunette of the Good Shepherd: Jesus Christ sitting in a rocky landscape with three sheep on either side, framed by a double cresting wave pattern in blue and gold (fig. 3). The north barrel vault is covered by the most well-known of the decorative mosaics, that of a field of elaborate flowers and rosettes, which is also framed by a cresting wave pattern. The soffit of the arch which terminates the north barrel vault has a basket at each end sprouting a garland of fruit with a Latin cross at the apex. The barrel vault of the south arm mirrors that of the north with the same flower pattern. The south lunette depicts what is usually believed to be St. Lawrence holding a cross and an open book (fig. 1). He stands next to the symbol of his martyrdom, the flaming gridiron, which in turn is next to an open cabinet, a *scrinium*,[29] with the four books of the Gospel. Both the south lunette and barrel vault are also framed by the cresting wave pattern. The soffit of the arch terminating the south vault contains a colorful three-dimensional double-meander.

The east and west barrel vaults and lunettes contain matching elements but are slightly different in detail. Each lunette has two deer flanking a small pool of water, all amidst curling acanthus leaves (fig. 4). Each barrel vault has an

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[28] Ernst Kitzinger, *Byzantine Art in the Making: Main Lines of Stylistic Development in Mediterranean Art, 3rd-7th Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980), 53.
[29] Giuseppe Bovini, *Églises de Ravenne* (Novara: Istituto geografico De Agostini, 1960), 28.

acanthus growing out of each of the short ends, sprouting a prophet and curling grape vines. At the apex of each vault is a wreathed Christological monogram containing the Chi-Rho flanked by the Greek letters alpha and omega. The lunettes and vaults are framed by two-dimensional patterns. On the east end is found a swastika meander in blue and gold (fig. 10), and on the west arm is found a T-meander also in blue and gold. Each arm is terminated by an arch, the soffits of which contain a pattern of small crenellated rectangles in rows – six rectangles making up a row in the west arch, and seven in a row in the east arch.

Each of the upper lunettes is framed by a twisted blue and green ribbon set against a red ground along the sides and top, and by a gold grape vine set against a blue ground at the bottom (figs. 1 and 5). Each lunette contains two male figures dressed in long white robes holding up their right hands in a gesture similar to the Roman gesture of acclamation. Between each apostle pair is a window. Above each window is a shell canopy with the head of a bird and strings of pearls. Below each window is a pair of doves drinking from or flanking a vase.

The dome contains 567 gold stars[30] in a spiral pattern, rather than concentric circles, surrounding a gold Latin cross, all set against a dark blue ground (fig. 5). In each of the pendentive corners is one of the Four Living

[30] According to Clementina Rizzardi, "Mosaici parietali esistenti e scomparsi di eta placidiana a Ravenna: iconografie imperiali e apocalittiche," *Corso di cultura sull'arte ravennate e bizantina* 40 (1993): 400, this number represents 3^4 x 7; alternately Bovini, *Ravenna Mosaics*, 9, says there are 800 stars. Rapid analysis reveals Rizzardi's number to be more accurate.

Creatures of the Apocalypse: the winged man, the winged lion, the winged bull, and the eagle.

THE MOSAICS: ACCEPTED PROGRAM

The canonical interpretation of the mosaics, which extends chiefly to the more narrative and emblematic scenes, was established by Ricci, Bovini, and Deichmann, with Seston and Rizzardi offering important elaborations.[31] Most interpretations state that there is a strong message of salvation enhanced by symbols of the Apocalypse. There is also funerary iconography, matching the probable function of the building. Veiled in all of this are references to the imperial status of the patron.

Upon entering the Mausoleum the viewer first sees the lunette of the martyr, St. Lawrence.[32] All martyrs are guaranteed a place in Heaven and are among the chosen for salvation in the book of Revelation (Rev. 7:14-17). The faith and martyrdom of St. Lawrence were held up as exemplary by Late Antique-era church fathers, including Augustine of Hippo and Pope Leo the Great.[33]

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[31] If not specifically cited then my sources are Ricci, Bovini, and Deichmann who tend to rely on each other: Corrado Ricci, "Il sepolcro di Galla Placidia in Ravenna," *Bollettino d'arte del Ministero della pubblica istruzione* (Milan) (1914): 141-174; Bovini, *Ravenna Mosaics*; Deichmann, *Ravenna*, vol. 1, *Geschichte und Monumente* (1969), 158-170, and vol. 2, *Kommentar*, part 1 (1974), 63-90; also these authors as summarized in Rizzardi, ed. *Il Mausoleo*.

[32] See Gillian Vallance Mackie, "The Early Medieval Chapel: Decoration, Form, and Function. A Study of Chapels in Italy and Istria in the Period between 313 and 741 AD (Ravenna, Milan, Rome)" (Ph.D. diss., University Of Victoria [Canada], 1991), 173-183, who gives a rundown on the theories of who this figure is: the Apocalyptic Christ (W. Seston), St. Lawrence (most accepted), and St. Vincent of Saragossa (Mackie's thesis).

[33] Sermons on St. Lawrence include: St. Augustine, *Sermo* 304 (*PL* 38.1395), and Leo the Great, *Sermo* 85 (*PL* 54.486).

Lawrence's placement near the four books of the Gospel invites the viewer to follow his example by following the life and deeds of Christ contained within the New Testament.

Turning around to face the entrance the viewer sees the Good Shepherd lunette. The position of the lunette evokes Christ's message: "I am the gate of the sheepfold...Anyone who enters through me will be safe: he will go freely in and out and be sure of finding pasture" (John 10:7-9).[34] Here Christ is depicted as the shepherd who will protect his flock (Psalm 23) and seek to save even one sheep from sin (Luke 15:3-7). The image of the Good Shepherd had been used in funerary contexts since pre-imperial Christian art. However, the Christ of the Mausoleum is not dressed as a typical shepherd, but is wearing the robes of an imperial person. The positioning of the Good Shepherd and St. Lawrence lunettes directly across from one another, and the similarities of the decorative mosaics that surround them, link the ideas contained in each. The good Christian must find salvation within by leading an exemplary life dedicated to Christ, and Christ will protect his faithful follower.

The theme of stags-at-water seen on the east and west lunettes was a popular motif for baptisteries. The best known of these scenes in mosaic was located at the baptistery of Salona in Dalmatia dating from the fifth century. Here the iconography was explained with the accompanying text from Psalm 42: "As

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[34] The King James Version of the New Testament uses the word "door" instead of "gate." Unless stated otherwise, all Biblical quotes are from Alexander Jones, ed., *The Jerusalem Bible*, Reader's ed. (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1966-1968), with separate pagination for the Old Testament and the New Testament.

the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God."[35] This Psalm was sung by catechumens as they prepared for the rite of baptism, which was held during Easter.[36] However, as Henry Maguire has pointed out, there are several instances of fifth-century mosaics depicting drinking deer that are not found in baptismal settings. Additionally, the writings of church fathers indicate that there was some creativity in interpreting this particular Psalm: The desert father Abbot Poemon (fourth-fifth century) saw the water brook as the Eucharist; St. Basil (fourth century) interpreted the message to mean the just who sought the waters of church teachings. Maguire believes it is best to interpret such scenes which lack inscriptions, as in the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia, in a more general sense of the faithful aspiring to Christ.[37] The theme of salvation in the stags-at-water lunettes, whether interpreted to be through the yearning for God, the taking of the Eucharist, or the teachings of the church, remains consistent with the theme of salvation of the other lunettes.

In the barrel vaults above the deer are found, amidst curling acanthus, four little men, two on each vault. Ricci believed these to be four apostles, and together with the eight figures of the upper lunettes, completed the number of 12

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[35] See F. Van der Meer, *Early Christian Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), 136; the text on the mosaic is in Latin, the translation is Van der Meer's. This Psalm is number 42 in the Hebrew Bible, and 41 in the Greek and Vulgate versions. See *The Jerusalem Bible, Old Testament*, 675.

[36] See Van der Meer, *Early Christian Art*, 136; Annabel Jane Wharton, "Ritual and Reconstructed Meaning: The Neonian Baptistery in Ravenna," *Art Bulletin* 69, no 30 (Sept. 1987): 361; and Henry Maguire, *Earth and Ocean: The Terrestrial World in Early Byzantine Art* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1987), 38 who provides the original cite to St. Augustine's text regarding this rite: *In Psalmum* XLI, enarratio, I.

[37] Maguire, *Earth and Ocean*, 38-39.

apostles.[38] However, as each of the four little figures holds a scroll they are usually interpreted as prophets.[39] Possibly they represent the four major prophets of the Old Testament: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, and Ezekiel. This would fit the Apocalyptic message found within the Mausoleum since the books of Daniel and Ezekiel were the basis of the Book of Revelation in the New Testament.[40]

At the apex of each of the east and west vaults is a wreath framing the Greek letters alpha and omega placed on either side of a Christological monogram (Chi-Rho) (fig. 11). This is believed to be a direct reference to the Book of Revelation where Christ states several times, "I am the Alpha and the Omega" (e.g., Rev. 1:8) and hence is part of the Apocalyptic iconography.

At first glance it appears that the plant that intertwines the prophets is the same acanthus that intertwines the deer of the east and west lunettes. However, upon closer examination, the plant surrounding the prophets proves to be a vine covered in grape clusters and leaves which originates in an acanthus bush (fig. 10). A more recognizable grapevine motif, also growing out of an acanthus bush, is used on the facing of all the arches, just under the apostles of the upper lunettes. The vine motif is believed to be a reference to the words of Christ found

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[38] Ricci, "Il sepolcro di Galla Placidia in Ravenna," 141. Bovini seems to have accepted this theory at first, see *Ravenna Mosaics*, 10.
[39] Bovini, *Églises de Ravenne*, 32; Stefano Bottari, "Ravenna: Mausoleo di Galla Placidia," in *Tesori d'arte cristiana* (Bologna: Officine grafiche poligrafici Il Resto del Carlino, 1966), 69.
[40] Mackie, "The Early Medieval Chapel," 169-170; *The Jerusalem Bible, Old Testament*, 969-970.

in John, chapter 15 which begins "I am the true vine," and promises salvation to those who follow in his path.

The upper lunettes contain eight figures which traditionally have been called apostles. However, on the eastern lunette appears the usual Early Christian pairing of Peter and Paul, and Paul was not one of the original twelve apostles. So who is precisely represented remains a mystery.[41] What they are doing is also unclear, and there are two opinions among scholars both focusing on the relationship between the apostles and the cross in the dome above them. The first view is that the apostles are raising their right hands in a gesture of *adoratio Crucis*, or adoration of the Cross, which has implications of the second coming of Christ. The act of *adoratio* indicated worship, such as was performed by the 24 Elders before the throne of the Apocalyptic Christ in Revelation 4:10-11. The second view is that the apostles are performing the gesture of *acclamatio Crucis*, or the acclamation of the Cross, a gesture which had its basis in the imperial Roman ceremony of acclamation. *Acclamatio* indicated respectful praise accorded to imperial personages. Perhaps the recipient of the praise is the Good Shepherd of the north lunette whose dress reflects the imperial status of Christ and the ceremony to which he is entitled.[42]

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[41] See Mackie, "The Early Medieval Chapel," 34, text and note 46, who states that Paul was held in high esteem by the Theodosian family. Galla Placidia had also patronized Saint Paul's Outside-the-Walls in Rome. Mackie also discusses the possible identification of some of the other figures, 37 and 167-169.

[42] See Silvia Pasi, "Notes," in Rizzardi, ed. *Il Mausoleo*, 232, for a summary of scholars and positions. In general, William Seston, "Le jugement dernier au Mausolée de Galla Placidia," *Cahiers archéologiques* 1 (1945): 49, comes down on the side of *adoratio Crucis*, whereas Deichmann, *Ravenna*, vol. 1, *Geschichte und Monumente*, 166, and vol. 2, *Kommentar*, part 1,

The garments of the apostles, tunics with pallia, are typical of ancient Roman senatorial dress and the robes of western deacons of the fifth century, and hence they have been linked stylistically to classical Roman art.[43] The fact that these garments are white could also be a reference to the clothing of the saved at the time of the Last Judgment: "they have washed their robes white again in the blood of the Lamb" (Rev. 7:14), or even to the white robes worn by the newly baptized.[44]

Below the apostles, in each lunette, are two doves with a vase. Two lunettes show the doves drinking, the other two have the doves merely flanking the vase. Both forms of the motif were fairly common even in classical Roman art, and by the fifth century had associations with Christian funerary art. The combination of doves and kantharos was used in catacomb paintings, in sarcophagi reliefs, and in the mosaics of mausolea. For Paulinus of Nola (c. 354-431) the dove represented the human soul who aspired to attain the Kingdom of Heaven.[45]

85, believes the act is one of *acclamatio*. For general commentary on *adoratio* and *acclamatio* see Richard Brilliant, *Gesture and Rank in Roman Art: the Use of Gestures to Denote Status in Roman Sculpture and Coinage*, Memoirs of the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences 14 (New Haven: Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1963), and Hans Peter L'Orange, *Studies on the Iconography of Cosmic Kingship in the Ancient World*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1953).

[43] Bovini, *Églises de Ravenne*, 12; also Meyer, "The So-called Mausoleum of Galla Placidia," 84, 86, who compares these simple tunics with the fifth-century garments of the eastern clergy which were elaborate and ornate.

[44] Wharton, "Ritual and Reconstructed Meaning," 364.

[45] Mackie, "The Early Medieval Chapel," 132-133, referring to Paulinus' *Epistola* 32, 15-16.

Above each apostle pair is an *umbracolum*,[46] or scallop-shell canopy. This is another motif ancient in origin, but by the fifth century, associated with funerary art, including the decoration in the Roman catacombs.[47] It was used as a device to denote a three-dimensional niche, usually for a holy or pious figure. In the Mausoleum, each canopy is created by the head and the wings of a bird.[48] What type of bird this may be is also a point of discussion among scholars. Is it the Holy Spirit descending from heaven like a dove (John 1:32) which might have Pentecostal implications, or is it the eagle which renews its vigor (Psalm 103: 5, Isaiah 40:31), which would have baptism or Resurrection implications?[49] Most scholars believe that the bird represented is the eagle. The eagle had Roman imperial signification, and was used as the symbol of the Roman emperor and military, and also in imperial funerary contexts where an eagle would be released

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[46] Bovini, *Églises de Ravenne*, 17.

[47] This motif may be related to the semi-circular fan shape seen in Pompeiian mosaics dated first century B.C.E.-first century C.E. See Asher Ovadiah, *Geometric and Floral Patterns in Ancient Mosaics: a Study of Their Origin in the Mosaics from the Classical Period to the Age of Augustus* (Rome: "L-Erma" di Bretschneider, 1980), 153. For a funerary example see the Catacomb of the Via Latina, Rome, c. 350-400, Room N, pictured in André Grabar, *The Beginnings of Christian Art, 200-395* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1967), 208, 227, 234. This form could be based on real canopies found over martyria. See Molly Teasdale Smith, "The Development of the Altar Canopy in Rome," *Rivista di archeologia cristiana* 50, nos. 1-4 (1974): 379-406.

[48] The canopy is also created in this manner above the heads of the apostles in Sant'Apollinare Nuovo.

[49] Those who say this is an eagle include Deichmann, *Ravenna*, vol. 2, *Kommentar*, part 1, 84; Ricci, "Il sepolcro di Galla Placidia in Ravenna," 142; Bovini, *Églises de Ravenne*, 17; Charles Rufus Morey, *Early Christian Art: An Outline of the Evolution of Style and Iconography in Sculpture and Painting, from Antiquity to the Eight Century* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1953), 158; and Bottari, "Ravenna: Mausoleo di Galla Placidia," 68; Supporting the argument for the dove are: Mackie, "The Early Medieval Chapel," 169; and Wharton, "Ritual and Reconstructed Meaning," 361,who states that baptism could be performed on Pentecost.

on the funeral pyre of the powerful indicating apotheosis.[50] The eagle is also the symbol of St. John the Evangelist, a saint to whom Galla Placidia was indebted.

Three strings of pearls hang from the top of the canopy, framing the head of the eagle. Some scholars see a link to Sassanian Persian art as pearls were a popular motif, but there may not be any direct connection. The scallop shell with pearls was used as early as the second century C.E. in a tomb under San Sebastiano in Rome,[51] and appeared later in Ravenna in the chancel mosaic of San Vitale over the head of Theodora (c. 547).[52]

Capping the whole interior is a dome studded with golden stars which encircle a golden cross. While the cross is an obvious Christian symbol, there is still some debate regarding its precise iconographic meaning. Some believe it is an imperial reference to the visionary cross witnessed by Constantine and memorialized as the *crux gemmata* in his palace in Constantinople.[53] Others see it as the Apocalyptic cross, the "sign of the Son of Man" (Matthew 24:30) that will appear in heaven at the time of the Second Coming of Christ.[54] The belief that

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[50] See for example Cassius Dio's description of Septimius Severus' funeral for the emperor Pertinax in 193 CE, where an eagle is released after the pyre was set on fire: J.J. Pollitt, *The Art of Rome, c. 753 B.C.-A.D. 337: Sources and Documents* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 192-193; also in Jas Elsner, *Imperial Rome and Christian Triumph: The Art of the Roman Empire A.D. 100-450* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 28-29.
[51] Doro Levi, *Antioch Mosaic Pavements* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1947), 432.
[52] For an illustration of the Theodora mosaic see Wolfgang Fritz Volbach, *Early Christian Art* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1961?), plate 167.
[53] Dominic Janes, *God and Gold in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 50, 53; Otto von Simson, *Sacred Fortress: Byzantine Art and Statecraft in Ravenna* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), 42-43.
[54] Deichmann, *Ravenna*, vol. 1, *Geschichte und Monumente*, 163; Seston, "Le jugement dernier au Mausolée," 49; Meyer, "The So-called Mausoleum of Galla Placidia," 74; Mackie, "The Early Medieval Chapel," 166.

the cross "shall precede the king" as a forewarning to the Last Judgment had entered into fourth- and fifth-century eschatology.[55] Supporting this Apocalyptic iconography is the fact that the vision of the cross in the Mausoleum appears in the night sky, as foretold by Matthew 24:29, "the sun will be darkened," and the prophet Daniel 7:13, "I gazed into the visions of the night." However, Constantine's vision of the cross also appeared at night.[56] Most likely then, there is a double meaning: The cross as symbol of imperial Orthodoxy and of the Last Judgment.

Reinforcing the Apocalyptic iconography are the stars near the cross and the four beasts in the pendentives. The cross of the dome is closely surrounded by seven stars, three stars nestled in each of the bottom crooks of the cross and one in the upper left (i.e., north) crook of the cross. This is seen as representing the seven stars held in the right hand of the Apocalyptic Christ (Rev. 1:16, 20).[57] The beasts in each of the corners of the dome are believed to represent the four Beasts, or Living Creatures, of the Apocalypse which appear to John in his Revelation (Rev. 4:7): first is the winged lion, second is the winged bull, third is the winged man, and fourth is the eagle. By the second century, these beasts had been used as symbols of the four evangelists: Mark, Luke, Matthew, and

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[55] Cyril, Archbishop of Jerusalem, "Lecture 13" [on the glory of the Cross], 41: "This shall appear again with Jesus from heaven; for the trophy shall precede the king," in *Early Church Fathers. Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, ser. 2, vol. 7. Online ver. 2.0. W. Harry Plantinga, website general ed. http://www.ccel.org/fathers2/ (28 June 2001).
[56] Von Simson, *Sacred Fortress*, 43.
[57] See Pasi, "Notes," in Rizzardi, ed. *Il Mausoleo*, 239.

John, respectively.[58] While scholars take sides on whether the creatures of the Mausoleum represent the Apocalyptic beasts or the evangelists, it is probably best to see them as both.[59] A clue to this is the impressive matching of the beasts in the pendentives with the order of the Gospel books in the cupboard of the St. Lawrence mosaic. Reading the book titles from left to right, top to bottom, we see the order of the names of the evangelists match the order of the beasts in John's Revelation: Mark (lion), Luke (bull), Matthew (man), John (eagle). In the dome this order is mirrored starting in the southwest corner, and continuing counter-clockwise to the northwest corner.[60]

A note should be made here about the use of imagery associated with baptism in a funerary chapel. There is no evidence that the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia was ever used as a baptistery,[61] and yet there are a few references to baptism, such as the drinking stags and the white clothing of the apostles. The sacrament of baptism was seen as rebirth following the death of the old life lived

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[58] Irenaeus (second half, second century) was the first to make this link, see Jones, ed., *The Jerusalem Bible, New Testament*, p. 325, note 4b.

[59] Ricci and Bovini (*Églises de Ravenne*, 16) see these as evangelist symbols and not as Apocalyptic symbols. Because the creatures in the Mausoleum do not carry books, which is a feature of later versions of the beasts, they have been interpreted as being symbols of the Apocalypse instead of the evangelists, with the books in the cupboard standing in for the evangelists. See Clementina Rizzardi, "Il Mausoleo nel mundo culturale e artistico di Galla Placidia" (The Mausoleum in the cultural-artistic world of Galla Placidia), in Rizzardi, ed. *Il Mausoleo*, 128, note 76.

[60] See Patrizia Angiolini Martinelli, "I mosaici: l'immagine da presenza scenica a suggestione simbolica" (The Mosaics: the Image from Scenic Presence to Symbolic Suggestion), in Rizzardi, ed. *Il Mausoleo*, 150 and 166, note 17, who refers to Deichmann, *Ravenna*, vol. 2, *Kommentar*, part 1, 77-78.

[61] There is no archaeological evidence for a font; there already was a major baptistery in Ravenna, that of Bishops Ursus and Neon near the cathedral; the position of the Mausoleum does not follow any convention for an Early Christian baptistery, which would be much more publicly accessible according to western architectural forms, or much more private according to

in sin. The ceremony took place during the night before Easter, as Easter was the celebration of the Resurrection of Christ from the dead.[62] During the ceremony the initiate was immersed three times in water, an act seen as symbolic of death and burial. According to Ambrose,

> ...we are buried in the element of water that we may rise again renewed by the Spirit. For in the water is the representation of death, in the Spirit is the pledge of life, that the body of sin may die through the water, which encloses the body as it were in a kind of tomb, that we, by the power of the Spirit, may be renewed from the death of sin, being born again in God.[63]

This interweaving of the themes of death and birth meant that there was a duplication of motifs used in both baptismal and funerary settings.

INTRODUCTION TO THE DECORATIVE MOSAICS

The iconography of the figural mosaics of the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia is heavily directed towards the idea of salvation: salvation through the protection of Christ, the examples of the martyrs, the sacrament of baptism, the words of the evangelists, and the salvation that awaits all pious Christians after the

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eastern forms; plus the cruciform shape was not used much for baptisteries after the octagonal/circular plan was established in the fourth century.

[62] See Cyril of Jerusalem, "Second Address on the Mysteries: Baptism," in *Documents in Early Christian Thought*, ed. Maurice Wiles and Mark Santer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), p. 181-182; Wharton, "Ritual and Reconstructed Meaning," 361, 366.

[63] St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan. "Three Books on the Holy Spirit. Book 1. Chapter 6, 76." In *Early Church Fathers. Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, ser. 2, vol. 10. Online ver. 2.0. W. Harry Plantinga, website general ed. http://www.ccel.org/fathers2/ (28 June 2001). See additional references to baptism/death made by Ambrose in Wharton, "Ritual and Reconstructed Meaning," 363, 366.

Apocalypse at the end of time.[64] Mixed in with this are imperial motifs appropriate to the probable patron, and funerary motifs appropriate to the probable function of the building.

What is missing from the standard interpretation of the mosaics is any mention of the decorative mosaics and how they might fit into the whole scheme. When the decorative mosaics are discussed, it is usually in terms of their aesthetic importance rather than any possible iconographical significance. Some scholars have seen the decorative mosaics as serving an important function of organizing the figural mosaics within the interior space of the Mausoleum.[65] While the patterns of the north and south vaults usually receive effusive praise by all scholars, there are several other patterns that are overlooked or underrepresented in scholarship. When looked at carefully and in context, what appear to be merely decorative patterns can be shown to have meaning. Some patterns have more obvious iconographical significance while other patterns have more subtle meanings.

The question of why it is important to extract meaning from the decorative mosaics must be addressed. Besides adding to the understanding of the iconography of the Mausoleum itself, there are other reasons less grounded in

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[64] The Late Antique belief was that upon death the common person, i.e., one who was not a saint or martyr, went to either purgatory and waited, or hell and was tormented, until the Judgment Day. Martyrs went straight to Heaven. See Allen E. Jones, "Is Britto in Hell? Travelers to (and from) the Infernal Regions in the Works of Gregory of Tours" (paper presented at *Shifting Frontiers IV*, the Fourth Biennial Conference of the Society of Late Antiquity, March 10, 2001).
[65] Kitzinger, *Byzantine Art in the Making*, 54-56; Martinelli, "I mosaici," in Rizzardi, ed. *Il Mausoleo*, 154.

the art of the fifth century. Since the Renaissance, art history scholarship has focused on the artist, specifically artists who produced "fine" arts: painting, sculpture, and architecture. Prior to the Renaissance the names of artists and craftspeople, including mosaicists, were often not recorded. Additionally, scholars who study art forms such as mosaics have had to find affirmation and status in art historical scholarship by allying themselves with one of the fine arts. Mosaic scholarship has long allied that art with painting.[66] Equally denigrated has been "decoration" which has been seen as merely prettification by means of the use of unoriginal and repetitive motifs handed down through time via pattern books. The history of decorative arts, functional objects that are decorated in fashionable ways, is not usually taught in art history programs since the objects are seen as lacking any original artistic merit. The history of certain art forms and techniques that have been used and created by women, such as textiles, is rarely taught; and this might be attributed to the dominance of a male perspective in scholarship.[67] Although these issues have begun to be addressed since the late-20th century, more work needs to be done. The mosaics of the Late Antique period are a fascinating place to start.

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[66] See for example Wladimiro Dorigo, *Late Roman Painting: A Study of Pictorial Records, 30 B.C.-A.D. 500* (New York: Praeger, 1971), throughout.

[67] See, for example, the discussion on this topic in Elizabeth Wayland Barber, *Women's Work: the First 20,000 Years: Women, Cloth, and Society in Early Times* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1994), 286-300.

CHAPTER 3, Part 1
Sources for the Decorative Motifs of the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia: Mosaics

The art of pavement mosaics is almost 2500 years old, and the art of wall and vault mosaics goes back just over 2000 years.[1] The Mausoleum of Galla Placidia is one of the earliest interiors to have its entire wall and vault mosaic program survive intact.[2] The study of mosaics is usually divided between those scholars who look at pavements versus those who study wall and vault decoration. Because of this, the Mausoleum is often allied with the later styles that have survived on walls and vaults, such as Byzantine art, or is seen as a transitional style from the crude Early Christian to the more grand Early Byzantine. However, the mosaics of the Mausoleum mirror motifs and compositional schemes from the entire history of mosaic arts up until the fifth century, while at the same time reflect contemporary Late Antique mosaic fashions. The mosaicists of the Mausoleum not only used both traditional and more fashionable patterns, they even showed innovation by creating a few new compositions, combinations, and motifs.[3]

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[1] Among the best sources for the general history of mosaics up to the Early Christian era is Katherine M. D. Dunbabin, *Mosaics of the Greek and Roman World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).
[2] Ernst Kitzinger, *Byzantine Art in the Making: Main Lines of Stylistic Development in Mediterranean Art, 3rd-7th Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980), 53.
[3] For historical background to mosaic arts see Appendix 1 of this paper.

THE ORNAMENTAL MOTIFS: MOSAICS

Compositionally, Ernst Kitzinger sees the entire interior of the Mausoleum like ancient emblema-based mosaic pavements in three-dimensions: Three-dimensional figural-based lunettes are surrounded by two-dimensional ornamental patterns. But even Kitzinger realizes that the Mausoleum does not fit neatly into this scheme.[4] The interior is perhaps best described as incorporating the earlier emblema tradition as practiced in Italian Christian art (seen in the lunettes) with elements which reflect the Late Antique trend toward abstraction and two-dimensionality – the repeat patterns of the north and south vaults, the use of traditional vaulting schemes modified to be more two-dimensional in the east and west vaults – all framed by innovative and ancient border motifs.

MEANDERS

The ornamental motifs of the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia can be divided roughly into three groups with a few motifs not readily categorized. The first group comprises the swastika-based motifs, which include the meander patterns.[5] This group includes the two-dimensional swastika meander bordering the east vault (fig. 10), the T-meander bordering the west vault (fig. 4), and the three-dimensional polychrome swastika meander of the south soffit (fig. 6).

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[4] Kitzinger, *Byzantine Art in the Making*, 53-56.
[5] See Asher Ovadiah, *Geometric and Floral Patterns in Ancient Mosaics: a Study of Their Origin in the Mosaics from the Classical Period to the Age of Augustus* (Rome: "L-Erma" di Bretschneider, 1980), 100, note 3: "All types of meander may be considered as having evolved from the swastika."

These are among some of the oldest motifs to be found in the Mausoleum, dating back to pebble mosaics and the earliest tessellated mosaics, c. the fifth century B.C.E.

RAINBOW STYLE MOTIFS

The next group consists of the rainbow-style motifs. The rainbow style is Doro Levi's term for patterns that used colored bands in either a gradation of dark to light hues, or separate colors arranged in parallel or zig-zag lines or squares.[6] Although some of these motifs appear earlier, this style was very fashionable during the Late Antique period beginning in the third century. The style appeared chiefly in Syria and the east but was used throughout the empire. Motifs belonging to this style are the crenellated "emerald rainbows" of the east and west soffits (figs. 1 and 6), the chevron of the lower window frame in the east arm (fig. 7), the ribbon wave in the upper window frames (fig. 8), and a derivative of the ribbon wave, the loose ribbon, which outlines the upper lunettes (figs. 1 and 6). Of these motifs, only the crenellation pattern in the east and west soffits is quite unusual, and appears to be without precedent in the art of mosaics, found neither in pavements nor wall/vault mosaics. It does appear later in the Orthodox Baptistery of Ravenna whose mosaics date to after 450. It may be related to

[6] Doro Levi, *Antioch Mosaic Pavements* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1947), 406-407.

Asher Ovadiah's Turreted Border motif[7] which has squared-off ends rather than pointed ends, or it could be a version of a trifoliated leaf.

The chevron pattern of the eastern lower window is best known as a filler motif for geometric grid pavements especially found in the eastern Roman provinces during the Late Antique period. Its use in the Mausoleum is unique, the other lower windows having floral motifs (fig. 9), so it may have been used as an orienting tool to indicate the east side of the chapel. The ribbon wave of the upper window frames did not appear in mosaics until the second century C.E., but remained popular as a framing motif until very late. It is also called the "twisted ribbon" by Levi who says this is a geometric stylization of a ribbon and hence the forerunner of the Late Antique version of the loose ribbon.[8]

The loose ribbon motif shows up as early as pebble mosaics, but during the Roman Empire it seems to have been concentrated in eastern mosaics. The Late Antique version is more regularized, hence Levi's association of it with the ribbon wave. The version seen in the Mausoleum is slightly unusual since the infill element within the curves of the ribbon is another ribbon. Usually this infill element is a leaf or flower. It is this particular feature that has led some to relate this motif to Sassanian Persian ornament, specifically the imperial ribbon, the *pativ*. However, Levi calls the infill element in the loose ribbon of the Mausoleum "a kind of geometric floret."[9]

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[7] Motif A24. See Ovadiah, *Geometric and Floral Patterns in Ancient Mosaics*, 107.
[8] Levi, *Antioch Mosaic Pavements*, 377, 456.
[9] *Ibid.*, 456, 483 note 350.

NATURE-RELATED MOTIFS: GENERAL

The third kind of ornament in the Mausoleum is comprised of motifs relating to nature. While motifs like vines, acanthus leaves, and garlands had been part of the mosaic repertoire since the beginnings in pebble mosaics, nature imagery became particularly popular during the Early Christian and Byzantine eras. Some of the traditional mosaic motifs do exist in the Mausoleum. The acanthus scroll can be seen in the east and west lunettes surrounding the drinking deer (fig. 4), while the leafy form of acanthus is to be found at each of the intersections of the upper lunettes at the base of the loose ribbon motif (fig. 6), as well as in the east and west vaults beneath the little prophets (fig. 10). The acanthus in its various forms had been a continual part of mosaic decoration since the fourth century B.C.E.

The vine-scroll and vine leaves are also motifs that have been part of the mosaic repertoire since the fourth century B.C.E. This motif is seen in gold against blue on the extrados of each of the vaults (figs. 1 and 6), and in the east and west vaults encircling the little prophets. The garland and the wreath seem to have only entered the mosaic repertoire during the second century B.C.E. These motifs can be seen in the Mausoleum surrounding the Christological monogram in the east and west barrel vaults (the wreath) (fig. 11), and the soffit of the north arm (garland) (fig. 12).

One particular type of vegetable design seen in the Mausoleum is the inhabited scroll.[10] It can be seen in the east and west vaults and lunettes where grape vines encircle the little prophets, and acanthus scrolls intertwine with the deer. This design had its roots in early Hellenistic sculpture, and began to appear in mosaic borders by the second century B.C.E. According to F. W. Deichmann, the particular version of the inhabited scroll found in the east and west vaults has its roots in North African pavement mosaics during the height of the Floral Style there, in the second and third centuries C.E.[11] This "field" variety of the inhabited scroll, as opposed to the border variety, is another type of composition that works well in both pavement and vault mosaics. It was widespread throughout the empire, lasting until the seventh century.

NATURE-RELATED MOTIFS: FLORAL

Other nature motifs seen in the Mausoleum are those of the floral variety, the usage of which also dates back to the beginnings with pebble mosaics. In the lower windows on the south and west sides are curving tendrils with a floral shape Levi calls a "floret"[12] (fig. 9). While this motif can be seen as an

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[10] See Claudine Dauphin, "The development of the 'inhabited scroll' in architectural sculpture and mosaic art from Late Imperial times to the seventh century A.D.," *Levant. Journal of the British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem* 19 (1987): 183-213; and J.M.C. Toynbee and J. B. Ward-Perkins, "Peopled Scrolls: a Hellenistic Motif in Imperial Art," *Papers of the British School at Rome* 18 (1950): 1-43.

[11] Silvia Pasi, "Notes," in Clementina Rizzardi, ed. *Il Mausoleo de Galla Placidia a Ravenna* (Modena: F.C. Panini, 1996), 223, using as her source Deichmann, *Ravenna: Hauptstadt des spätantiken Abendlandes*, vol. 2, *Kommentar*, part 1 (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1974), 81.

[12] Levi, *Antioch Mosaic Pavements*, 444 and throughout, who means it to indicate a bud rather than a fully-bloomed flower.

abstracted descendant of other vegetable scrolls, it can also be viewed as a precursor to a motif termed the "celestial flower" by Gillian Mackie. These celestial or paradisiacal flowers, buds atop long curving stems, appear in mosaics and manuscript illumination of ninth-century Rome.[13]

The dominant floral pattern seen in the Mausoleum is the rosettes of the north and south vaults (fig. 13). The term "rosette" is used by various scholars to describe many different types of flowers, including the quatrefoil-like flower with heart-shaped petals of red, orange, and yellow divided by a green cross, and the blue eight-petalled daisy, both found in the north and south vaults. Both types of flowers are ancient: The daisy can be seen in pebble mosaics of the fourth century B.C.E., and Levi states that the crossed rosette was "widely used in Hellenistic mosaics" for example in Pergamon.[14] By the second century C.E., the quatrefoil rosette was prevalent in Italian black-and-white mosaics, in North African mosaics, and especially in Antiochene mosaics where it became very popular from the fourth century on.[15]

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[13] Gillian Vallance Mackie, "Abstract and Vegetal Design in the San Zeno Chapel, Rome: the Ornamental Setting of an Early Medieval Funerary Programme," *Papers of the British School at Rome* 63 (1995): 178-180. Mackie herself does not see the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia as a source for this motif, but the similarities between the motif as seen in the San Zeno Chapel (ninth century) and in the Mausoleum are remarkable.

[14] Levi, *Antioch Mosaic Pavements*, 376.

[15] See Marion Elizabeth Blake, "Mosaics of the Late Empire in Rome and Vicinity," *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome* 17 (1940): 84-85, for Hadrian's Villa in Tivoli; James Lionel Trilling, *The Medallion Style: a Study in the Origins of Byzantine Taste* (New York: Garland, 1985), 31 figures 13 and 15, for Themetra and Dar Zmela in Tunisia, and G. Picard, "Un thème du style fleuri dans la mosaïque africaine," in *Colloques Internationaux du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique: La Mosaïque Gréco-Romaine, Paris, 29 Août-3 Septembre 1963* (Paris: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1965), 125-133 for North Africa; and Levi, *Antioch Mosaic Pavements*, 377, 415, 424-425, for Antioch.

Surrounding the flowers of the north and south vaults are various versions of the trifoliated leaf. The leaves surrounding the white flowers appear to be derived from vine leaves, with more abstracted, rounded lobes. The leaves surrounding the quatrefoil rosettes, however, appear to be taken from a border motif called a "trifid" which was sometimes shaded in rainbow-style fashion. This motif seems to have appeared late in mosaic art, around the second century C.E. Versions of it can be found in North Africa and Spain.[16]

NATURE-RELATED MOTIFS: WAVE CREST

Surrounding the north and south vaults is one motif that can be considered a nature-related motif. This is the running wave crest, probably the oldest motif to be found in the Mausoleum, dating back to pebble mosaics of the fifth century B.C.E. This motif was usually used as a border in combination with other border motifs, especially the guilloche and meander.[17] However, it is unusual to be used as a solitary band, and in the Mausoleum it is set up as a double running wave border, which when compared to the single running wave, was much less common in mosaics[18] (figs. 3, 6, and 12)

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[16] In Saragossa, Spain, and Acholla, El Djem (El Jemm), and Makhtar, Tunisia. See Catherine Balmelle, et al., *Le Décor géométrique de la mosaïque romaine: répertoire graphique et descriptif des compositions linéaires et isotropes* (Paris: Picard, 1985), 135; also Abdelaziz Driss, *Il fantastico nei mosaici de Tunisia* (Rome?: Lerici, [196-?]), plates 10-15.

[17] Levi, *Antioch Mosaic Pavements*, 373.

[18] Pasi, "Notes," 217-218. One example of the double running wave border in mosaics can be found in the floor mosaic of *Oecus* 456, in the Western Palace at Masada, Israel, dated to the first century B.C.E. See Dunbabin, *Mosaics of the Greek and Roman World*, 188 fig. 200.

CONCLUSION AND INTRODUCTION TO TEXTILES

As has been shown, most ornamental motifs found in the Mausoleum can be traced back to earlier mosaics. Some elements of the Mausoleum reflect developments in contemporary Late Antique art: the tendency toward abstraction and two-dimensionality, plus the use of fashionable motifs such as the rainbow style and nature imagery. Innovations seen in the Mausoleum include the "emerald rainbow" and the use of the double wave border. It is also possible that the use of the repeat pattern and the field version of the inhabited scroll on vaults is innovative. The analysis of the mosaics could be confined to the history of mosaics except for one important factor, that of the comparison established by scholars of the north and south vaults to textiles. Textile sources for the ornamental motifs of the Mausoleum will be considered next.

CHAPTER 3, Part 2

Sources for the Decorative Motifs of the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia:
Textiles of the Late Antique Era

In many descriptions of the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia, a comparison is made between the appearance of the north and south vaults and textiles. These comparisons are often cursory and the Mausoleum's relationship to the textile arts of the Late Antique era has never been fully explored. The aim of this chapter is to draw a connection between Late Antique textiles and the mosaics of the Mausoleum, via the motifs found in the ornamental mosaics and the way in which the motifs are used within the interior architectural space.[1]

THE ORNAMENTAL MOTIFS: TEXTILES

Some ornamental motifs seen in the mosaics of the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia were particularly common in textiles due to their suitability as woven designs. When we subject the motifs found in the ornamental mosaics of the Mausoleum to analysis we find that most of them have been used in textiles of the Late Antique period.

[1] For historical background to textile arts see Appendix 2 of this paper.

MEANDERS

A common motif in ancient textiles was the meander in its various forms. Like the meander motifs as used in the Mausoleum, two-dimensional meanders were used as borders, especially in ancient Greek textiles, but also in ancient Chinese textiles.[2] The two-dimensional T-meander border and the swastika meander border, seen in the east and west vaults of the Mausoleum, had been used in ancient Greek textiles as early as the sixth century B.C.E.[3] A linen tunic from Egypt of the third-fourth centuries, has bands of T-meanders framing other ornamental bands as its decorative feature.[4] A late-fourth century ivory diptych of the Roman general Stilicho and his wife Serena shows that the swastika meander could be used as a border for very expensive fabrics. Stilicho's garment, decorated with a repeat pattern suggesting a drawloom silk, is bordered at the hem by a swastika meander.[5] During the Late Antique era, meander motifs were more typically used in confined ornaments such as squares or circles which decorated otherwise plain garments. For example, two fragments in the Textile Museum in Washington, D.C., one a square ornament and the other a

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[2] See R. Pfister, *Textiles de Palmyre découverts par le Service des antiquités du Haut-commissariat de la République française dans la necropole de Palmyre* (Paris: Editions d'Art et d'Histoire, 1940), 3:43, for Chinese textiles found in Palmyra. The Chinese meander is a little more elaborate than the Greek meander.

[3] Diane Lee Carroll, "Patterned Textiles in Greek Art: a Study of Their Designs in Relationship to Real Textiles and to Local and Period Styles" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 1965), 179 (T-meander), and 188 (swastika meander ("double meander-unit band")).

[4] A. F. Kendrick, *Catalogue of Textiles from Burying-Grounds in Egypt* (London: H. M. Stationery Office, 1920-1922), 1:37, 40.

[5] The diptych is traditionally dated to c. 390-400, and is currently located at the Monza Cathedral Treasury, Italy. See illustration in Wolfgang Fritz Volbach, *Early Christian Art* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1961?), plate 63.

round ornament, dated to the fourth to fifth centuries, show repeated and connected swastika meanders filling the space within their respective borders.[6]

Less common in textiles is the three-dimensional meander. A colorful fourth- to fifth-century cut-loop textile from Egypt has a meander border which uses polychrome shading to effect a three-dimensional quality.[7] A two-dimensional version of the colorful three-dimensional meander seen in the Mausoleum, i.e., a double swastika meander with rectangular filler, was used in ancient Greek textiles as early as the sixth century B.C.E.[8]

RAINBOW STYLE MOTIFS

Rainbow style motifs were very popular in Late Antique textiles, especially in tapestry weave fabrics. Zig-zags and chevrons had been used as motifs in textiles for centuries and by the Late Antique era had become the vehicle of choice for displaying the rainbow style.[9] The cut-loop rug in the Metropolitan Museum discussed above displays several variations on the rainbow style including multi-colored chevrons, diamonds, and bands. Small multi-colored zig-

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[6] James Lionel Trilling, "The Roman Heritage: Textiles from Egypt and the Eastern Mediterranean 300-600 A.D.," *Textile Museum Journal* 21 (1982): 90 (catalog nos. 99, 100). The swastika was also used as a stand-alone motif during the Late Antique period. See Kendrick, *Burying-Grounds*, 1:43 for a discussion of some fifth century examples, and Maria Luisa Rinaldi, "Il costume romano e i mosaici di Piazza Armerina," *Rivista dell'Istituto Nazionale d'Archeologia e Storia dell'Arte*, n.s., 13-14 (1964-1965), 225, for a stele relief of a figure wearing a garment with this motif.

[7] This item was probably used as a floor rug and is astonishingly similar to contemporary floor mosaics. See the Metropolitan Museum of Art website, http://www.metmuseum.org/collections/view1.asp?dep=20&full=0&item=31%2E2%2E1 (12 March 2003).

[8] Carroll, "Patterned Textiles," 144.

[9] See *Ibid.*, generally for these shapes in Greek textiles from the eighth to second centuries B.C.E.

zag bands were often used on Late Antique textiles as fillers for borders, especially around garment ornaments. A single border could have zig-zags of red, green, yellow, blue, and natural linen, sometimes outlined in black.

Exact textile parallels to the crenellated "emerald rainbows" of the east and west soffits of the Mausoleum are difficult to find. In his research on mosaic patterns, Asher Ovadiah discussed the motif closest to this one, his Turreted Border motif, stating that some scholars see a link to textiles. This motif resembles tassels or the fringe of unhemmed fabric, the existence of which in the ancient world there is literary confirmation.[10] The jagged edges used in this motif may also have been derived from the very common zig-zag motif. Some textile fragments from Dura Europos contain rainbow bands, changing from buff to dark green, but these motifs do not have jagged edges.[11]

The ribbon wave motif has its beginnings in textile arts. A simple two-dimensional version with widely spaced waves was used in Greek textiles beginning in the sixth century B.C.E.[12] The rainbow ribbon wave which outlines the upper windows of the Mausoleum was used in Late Antique textiles as a border motif. The motif in the Mausoleum and the motif as used in textiles follow

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[10] Asher Ovadiah, *Geometric and Floral Patterns in Ancient Mosaics: a Study of Their Origin in the Mosaics from the Classical Period to the Age of Augustus* (Rome: "L-Erma" di Bretschneider, 1980), 107. Ovadiah himself does not see a link to textiles; the scholars he cites who do are: M. Rostovtzeff, M. E. Blake, B. R. Brown, and G. Becatti.

[11] See R. Pfister and Louisa Bellinger, *The Excavations at Dura-Europos conducted by Yale University and the French Academy of Inscriptions and Letters. Final Report IV. Part II. The Textiles* (New Haven: Yale University Press; London: Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press, 1945), 10, 36 (catalog no. 127), and 63 (Trocadero Museum TR 33-11 fragment).

[12] This open form developed from a version where the waves were pulled tightly together; see Carroll, "Patterned Textiles," 96.

the same color scheme: Red to orange gradation on one side and dark blue to light blue on the other side.[13]

The loose ribbon motif as seen in mosaics is a direct representation of a textile. Even more fascinating is that the ribbon motif is also depicted as woven decoration on textiles. Ovadiah believed the ribbon motif in mosaics was derived not from ribbons but from depictions of ribbons on textiles, a use of the motif which dates back to ancient Assyria and Greece.[14] A fifth-century tapestry in the Textile Museum in Washington, .D.C., depicts ribbons in arches, the way in which the motif is used in the Mausoleum.[15]

NATURE-RELATED MOTIFS: GENERAL

Motifs relating to nature were prevalent in Late Antique textiles, and in fact make up the bulk of textile motifs during this era. One of the most common motifs was the leaf and leafy scroll, often used in borders. Common leaf types represented in Coptic-style textiles are (in order of most prevalent) grapevines,

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[13] Or blue to green gradation. Some textile examples include: the outer border of a textile hanging with a Nilotic scene dating to the fifth century now in the Louvre, Paris (Wolfgang Fritz Volbach, *Early Decorative Textiles* (London: Hamlyn Publishing Group, 1969), 11-12), and a hanging in the British Museum done in loop pile to emphasize the gradation of colors where the ribbon wave is used to denote the upper portion of a boat (Anna Gonosová, "Textiles," in *Beyond the Pharaohs: Egypt and the Copts in the 2nd to the 7th centuries AD* (Providence: Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design, 1989), 126 (catalog no. 36)). It is interesting to note that the motif is used in these hangings meant for walls, as well as in wall painting, e.g., the borders of the wall paintings from the Dura Europos synagogue.

[14] Ovadiah, *Geometric and Floral Patterns in Ancient Mosaics*, 109, in discussing his motif B1 Scroll (Wavy ribbon). The motif can be seen on garments depicted in 9th century B.C.E. Assyrian relief sculpture and seventh-sixth century B.C.E. Greek pottery.

[15] Trilling, "The Roman Heritage," 59 (catalog no. 45 [Textile Museum no. 711.26]).

acanthus scrolls, and ivy-leaf scrolls.[16] Often identification depended on the context. For example, a vine motif with grapes indicated a grape leaf. In many of the ornaments found on garments in the Coptic style, the leaf was an abstracted motif, taking the tri-lobed form, sometimes with smooth edges, sometimes with serrated edges. Examples of the leafy vine used during the Late Antique era range from naturalistic polychrome grapevines, to abstracted monochrome tunic decorations.[17]

The leafy scroll is also used in the Mausoleum as an inhabited scroll, a motif found in Late Antique textiles. Vine scrolls and acanthus scrolls were both used for the inhabited scroll in textiles. This motif was used especially during the fourth through seventh centuries, and included people, putti, birds, and animals as inhabitants of the leafy scrolls.[18] A fragment of a fifth- to sixth-century ornament shows a deer surrounded by flowers and leaves, although the deer is simply standing and not drinking as the deer are in the Mausoleum.[19] People were often shown in association with animals, sometimes in hunting scenes. Surviving fragments show peopled scrolls could be used in band form, but were

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[16] Gonosová, "Textiles," 70.
[17] For the naturalistic grapevine (red grapes against a dark green ground) see W.F. Volbach and O. Wulff, *Spätantike und Koptische Stoffe aus Agyptischen Grabfunden, in den Staatlichen museen, Kaiser-Friedrich-museum, Agyptisches museum, Schliemann-sammlung* (Berlin: E. Wasmuth, 1926), 9 (catalog no. 9067, plate 6). For leaf decoration in tunic ornaments see for example, Trilling, "The Roman Heritage," 50 (catalog no. 28).
[18] Claudine Dauphin, "The development of the 'inhabited scroll' in architectural sculpture and mosaic art from Late Imperial times to the seventh century A.D.," *Levant. Journal of the British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem* 19 (1987): 185, lists 11 examples in note 25. See also Jocelyn M.C. Toynbee and J. B. Ward-Perkins, "Peopled Scrolls: a Hellenistic Motif in Imperial Art," *Papers of the British School at Rome* 18 (1950): 26.
[19] Trilling, "The Roman Heritage," 34 (catalog no. 10).

usually in contained-ornament form, such as within a roundel. In such ornaments the scroll is often depicted emanating from a central motif such as a basket or vase, similar to the motifs in the east and west vaults of the Mausoleum in which foliage emanating from a central motif entwines the little prophets.

Birds were very common animal motifs on textiles, and were used in inhabited scrolls and repeats. They were also often depicted in association with vases such as they appear in the upper lunettes of the Mausoleum.[20]

Polychrome wreaths and garlands were also common motifs in Late Antique textiles. Wreaths were sometimes used as framing devices.[21] A fifth-century textile in the Victoria and Albert Museum shows a red and green wreath framing a jeweled cross, similar to the form of the wreath framing the Chi-Rho in the east and west vaults of the Mausoleum.[22] Garlands were especially used as bands across a length of fabric, such as a hanging. As depicted in the Mausoleum the garland is associated with baskets. The basket was another common motif in textiles, although it often contained flowers or grapes rather than a garland. One fourth- or fifth-century tapestry weave fragment in the

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[20] There are numerous examples of textile fragments with bird motifs. See, for example, Annemarie Stauffer, *Textiles of Late Antiquity* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1995), 9 (catalog no. 18), and 21 (catalog no. 48). For birds with vases see Trilling, "The Roman Heritage," 98 (catalog no. 108). See Kendrick, *Burying-Grounds*, 2:13 (catalog no. 312) for a fifth-century polychrome example with vines, inhabited by birds, growing from a vase.

[21] For example, see Stauffer, *Textiles*, 20 (catalog no. 45) for a late fifth-early sixth century hanging where wreaths form frames for busts.

[22] Kendrick, *Burying-Grounds*, 2:15 (catalog no. 318).

Victoria and Albert Museum depicts baskets of fruit hanging from festoons of leafy garlands.[23]

NATURE-RELATED MOTIFS: FLORAL

The mosaics of the Mausoleum compared most often with textiles are those of the north and south vaults. As most of the motifs found in these vaults are found on surviving fragments of Late Antique textiles as well as depictions of textiles, the comparison is an appropriate one.

The floral patterning seen on the north and south vaults is similar to patterns depicted on garments on some consular diptychs: individual flowers surrounded by concentric circles, repeated across the entire vault. The eight-petalled marguerite, which appears as a light blue flower in the north and south vaults of the Mausoleum, can also be seen in at least one diptych, that of the Consul Anastasius from Constantinople dated 517.[24]

Another example of the marguerite motif can be found on a large drawloom wool textile from the fifth century now at the Textile Museum in Washington, D.C. Here the eight-petalled flower with a small disc as its center is contained within two concentric polygons. The whole motif is then repeated in several rows across the width of the fabric.[25]

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[23] *Ibid.*, 1:46 (catalog no. 19).
[24] Kurt Weitzmann, ed. *Age of Spirituality: Late Antique and Early Christian Art, Third to Seventh Century. Catalogue of the Exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, November 19, 1977, through February 12, 1978* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art; in association with Princeton University Press, 1979), 97-98 (catalog no. 88).
[25] Trilling, "The Roman Heritage," 98 (catalog no. 108).

One of the most ubiquitous floral forms in fourth- and fifth-century textiles was the quatrefoil rosette in the same form as it is seen in the Mausoleum: a rosette formed by a green (or dark-colored) cross dividing a quatrefoil of heart-shaped petals of red, orange, and yellow (sometimes just red and orange, or red and pink). Several surviving pieces of textiles with this motif are mere fragments which contain only this one decorative element,[26] while some are larger pieces and contain several of these motifs along with others. Some surviving pieces are very large and their size indicates they were used as hangings or as furniture covers. These larger textiles show the motif could be used in a border, band, or block, as a repeated motif, or as a free motif in a large field. The motif was used in various contexts, but often along with other nature motifs, with baskets, or in hunting scenes. This motif is also depicted in mosaic as a repeated motif on the garment of one of Theodora's attendants in the chancel mosaic of San Vitale,[27] and in the curtains of the Palatium mosaic of Sant'Apollinare Nuovo (fig. 14).

The floral forms as used in the north and south vaults of the Mausoleum are not only directly represented in textile arts, but the way they are used indicates they represent a specific type of textile. Large regularized repeats indicate a drawloom silk, a type of fabric only meant for the elite.

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[26] Probably because the motif was cut from larger pieces.

[27] The rosette had been used for centuries prior to and after its hey-day during the fourth-fifth centuries. This quatrefoil floral shape has been used in textiles since the eighth century B.C.E. See Carroll, "Patterned Textiles," 138. Anna Muthesius, *Byzantine Silk Weaving: AD 400 to AD 1200* (Vienna: Fassbaender, 1997), catalog no. M1244 (plate 17B) and M541 (plate 62B), are

NATURE-RELATED MOTIFS: WAVE CREST

The double running wave crest is used as a border in the north and south vaults and lunettes of the Mausoleum. The particular type seen in the Mausoleum, the double running wave, was not common in mosaics. In Late Antique textiles there are several surviving examples of this motif. These fragments show the motif as a monochromatic band (purple or black against undyed linen) running across the length of the fabric. The single wave crest was often used as a border for an ornament, such as a roundel. This motif, used in Greek textiles as early as the eighth century B.C.E.,[28] was common especially in textiles of the monochromatic Coptic tradition dating to the fourth and fifth centuries.

OTHER MOTIFS

Other motifs in the Mausoleum have textile associations, rather than direct representations in textiles. In addition to the ribbon motif framing the upper lunettes, other motifs were derived from ways in which actual textiles were used. The scallop-shell canopies above the apostles in the upper lunettes may have been derived from an umbrella-shaped baldachin or an awning.[29] This motif was

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Byzantine silk pieces dated between 500 and 900, each with the rosette motif. For an illustration of the Theodora mosaic see Volbach, *Early Christian Art*, plate 167.

[28] Carroll, "Patterned Textiles," 195.

[29] Rainer Graefe, "Textile Schmuckformen an Fassaden und Dachern; Textile Ornamentation on Façades and Roofs," *Daidalos: Berlin Architectural Journal* no. 29 (15 September 1988): 86. See Marion Elizabeth Blake, "Mosaics of the Late Empire in Rome and Vicinity," *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome* 17 (1940): 99, for discussion of the awning border in mosaics.

used in both floor and wall mosaics throughout the Roman world after the first century C.E., sometimes with an illusionistic "fringe."[30]

The starry sky of the Mausoleum also has associations with textiles. The asterisk field motif was used in Greek textiles as early as the sixth century B.C.E.,[31] although it is not known if this motif was always meant to represent stars. The veil of the second temple of Jerusalem was known to be an enormous tapestry embroidered with an image of the panorama of the heavens. This veil separated the tabernacle from the Holy of Holies, in which the Ark of the Covenant was housed. Visions of the tabernacle and of the Holy of Holies are part of the Book of Revelation, a text which forms the basis of much of the imagery in the Mausoleum.[32]

CONCLUSION: THE TENTED SPACE

The way in which ornamental motifs are used in the Mausoleum is a very important aspect to the connection with textiles. In general the surfaces in the Mausoleum covered with figural or narrative scenes are flat surfaces, such as the lunettes. The surfaces covered with ornamental patterns tend to be curving,

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[30] See Katherine M. D. Dunbabin, *Mosaics of the Greek and Roman World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 111, fig. 111, for a third-century example of a floor with four elements that resemble a birds-eye view of an umbrella with fringe.

[31] Carroll, "Patterned Textiles," 179.

[32] See Margaret Barker, "Beyond the Veil of the Temple: The High Priestly Origin of the Apocalypses," *Scottish Journal of Theology*, 51, no. 1 (1998):1-21, http://www.marquette.edu/maqom/veil (19 Feb. 2003), and David Ulansey, "The Heavenly Veil Torn: Mark's Cosmic *Inclusio*," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 110, no. 1 (spring 1991): 123-25, http://www.well.com/user/davidu/veil.html (19 Feb. 2003), both of whom discuss the description of the veil by Josephus in his *Jewish Wars* (5.212-213) and the relationship of this veil to Christian Apocalypticism.

plastic surfaces such as the vaults, soffits, and corners. By utilizing the decorative motifs in this way the designers of the Mausoleum emulated the fluid quality of textiles and created the illusion of an interior space tented with precious fabrics.

CHAPTER 4, Part 1
The Meaning of the Decorative Mosaics:
Iconography

The generally accepted interpretation of the figural and emblematic mosaics in the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia encompasses themes of salvation, death, imperiality, and the Apocalypse. A close examination of the ornamental motifs, especially in light of their links to textiles, extends this accepted mosaic program and strengthens certain theories regarding function and patron.

EARLY CHRISTIAN ART AND COMPLEXITY OF MEANING

It has been shown that many of the figural and emblematic scenes and motifs in the Mausoleum could be interpreted in several different ways, which is a typical characteristic of art of the Late Antique era. The artwork of the Early Christian and Early Byzantine periods was very complex in its symbolism. In fact, it is this symbolism that has made Early Christian art stand apart from its predecessors.[1] Some images acted like shorthand to represent an entire story or idea, such as the stags at water in the Mausoleum serving as a reference to Psalm 42. Some images represented concepts in a metaphorical way, such as the image of Christ in the guise of the Good Shepherd who will care for his

[1] Ernst Kitzinger, *Byzantine Art in the Making: Main Lines of Stylistic Development in Mediterranean Art, 3rd-7th Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977, second printing 1980), 6, and Jas Elsner, *Art and the Roman Viewer: the Transformation of Art from the Pagan World to Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 7.

Christian flock as a shepherd cares for his sheep. Some images were used as signs to represent a larger whole, such as the six sheep of the Good Shepherd lunette standing in for all of Christ's followers. Drawing on semiotics, scholars usually use the terms signs (metonyms, i.e. the stags and sheep) and symbols (metaphors, i.e. Christ as the Good Shepherd) when discussing Early Christian art. However, images often functioned on several levels, such as the stags at water representing a Psalm, hence baptism, hence the renewal of life after death, yet at the same time being representative of nature.[2] In the absence of inscriptions, the modern viewer of Early Christian art has to look at context: the building in which the image exists, other motifs that are placed in association with an image, and if an image is emphasized via borders and placement.[3] In fact there is evidence that Early Christian artists and patrons relied on this complexity of the multiplicity of meanings along with context to challenge the viewer, and that the meanings viewers themselves might give to the work were part of the process.[4] In such a situation it is a useful effort to see if this complexity extends to the ornamental and decorative aspects of a monument such as the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia. This chapter will be organized according to the

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[2] The literature of the Church Fathers also functioned in this way; see, for example, Elizabeth James, "Colour and the Byzantine Rainbow," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 15 (1991): 66-94, on the complexity of color symbolism; and Henry Maguire, *Earth and Ocean: The Terrestrial World in Early Byzantine Art* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1987), 8, who references Gregory of Nazianzus, *Fifth Theological Oration* (fourth century) to show that the meanings of images were not fixed.

[3] Maguire, *Earth and Ocean*, 82.

[4] Elsner, *Art and the Roman Viewer*, 249, who gathers this point of view from reading Paulinus of Nola, c. late fourth to early fifth century; see also Maguire, *Earth and Ocean*, 13.

themes promoted by the narrative elements, and will explore the ornamental motifs as they relate to these themes.

FUNERARY MOTIFS

It is assumed that the Mausoleum served a funerary function based on its original association with the sepulchral church of Santa Croce. The doves with vases, the scallop shell canopies with pearls, and the reference to baptism made by the stags-at-water scene all provide funerary symbolism. It is, however, the ornamental mosaics which strengthen this meaning through references to the trappings typical of Late Antique funerary practices.

FUNERARY FLORA

The north and south barrel vaults of the Mausoleum contain what is probably the most famous Early Christian decorative mosaic pattern – and the least understood. What it shows is a repeat pattern of three flower types against a dark blue ground (fig. 13). Small eight-petalled light blue marguerites with gold centers and gold dots on either side alternate with two more complex floral forms. One has a white and blue flower with squared-off petals surrounded by concentric circles of blue, white, and gold, with outer petals of blue and green, and trifoliated leaves of gold around the edges. The other has a rosette formed by a green cross dividing a quatrefoil of heart-shaped petals of red, orange, and

yellow, enclosed by blue and green circles, the outer circle of which is made up of crenellated green and blue petals.

Determining Floral Forms. These three flower types have been called stars[5] and even snowflakes.[6] As will be shown, most of the elements of this vault can be traced to plant forms. The link to snowflakes is probably based on the modern conception of this phenomenon, and there is no clear and unambiguous example of snowflakes in the art of this period. However, the comparison with stars is more intriguing. The eight-petalled daisy shape is the same shape used for the depiction of the star of the Magi on Palestinian ampullae of the sixth and seventh centuries. While the source for this motif is unknown, D.V. Ainalov suggests that it was the mosaics of the churches of the Holy Land of the fourth century.[7] Such a star can also be seen in the triumphal arch of Santa Maria Maggiore, Rome, which is contemporary with the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia. However, these examples show a star in the context of the Adoration. More interesting is the use of the eight-pointed star shape in gold against a blue

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[5] Somewhat surprisingly by two of the most well-known scholars in this field who must have seen some of the motifs in floral contexts: Charles Rufus Morey, *Early Christian Art: An Outline of the Evolution of Style and Iconography in Sculpture and Painting, from Antiquity to the Eight Century* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1953), 158; and Kitzinger, *Byzantine Art in the Making*, 54. Giuseppe Bovini, *Ravenna Mosaics* (Oxford: Phaidon Press, 1978, c1957), 10, calls the daisies stars: "studded with pale blue stars and little gold disks."

[6] Starleen Kay Meyer, "The So-called Mausoleum of Galla Placidia" (master's thesis, University of California, Riverside, 1983), 43 and 56; Silvia Pasi, "Notes," in Clementina Rizzardi, ed. *Il Mausoleo de Galla Placidia a Ravenna* (Modena: F.C. Panini, 1996), 216, calls them flowers but states that they resemble snowflakes.

[7] Dmitrii Vlasevich Ainalov, *The Hellenistic Origins of Byzantine Art* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1961), 233, 237.

ground in the barrel vault of the baptistery at Dura Europos, c. early third century. This theme, gold stars against a blue ground, is seen in chapels and churches across the Christian world, including the dome of the Mausoleum, and continued into the late Byzantine period and beyond.[8] It is more likely that the eight-pointed star shape in gold against a blue ground was perceived as a heavenly star, and that the same shape in another context would take on meaning appropriate to that context. Hence, in the context of other floral forms the eight-pointed shape would be a daisy or marguerite.

Yet this eight-pointed star/flower shape was so prevalent in the Late Antique in a variety of contexts that it is the most difficult of the motifs of the Mausoleum to pin down. Other contexts which depict this motif include Christian African oil lamps of the fourth-fifth centuries[9]; jewelry, for example, a necklace of the early fifth century from the Piazza della Consolazione treasure[10]; an ampulla from Monza which does not depict an Adoration scene, but has six-pointed "stars" all around the edge[11]; and the Ravenna Diptych of unknown date,

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[8] For example, the seventh-century apse of Sant'Agnese fuori le mura, Rome; the Emmanuel and Ascension domes of San Marco, Venice, 11th century; and the Sistine Chapel, Rome, late 15th century, before Michelangelo's renovations. For a discussion of sources for this motif reaching back to the Egyptians and Babylonians see E. Baldwin Smith, *The Dome: a Study in the History of Ideas*, Princeton Monographs in Art and Archaeology 25 (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1950), 79.

[9] Morey, *Early Christian Art*, fig. 96, 275-276.

[10] Kurt Weitzmann, ed. *Age of Spirituality: Late Antique and Early Christian Art, Third to Seventh Century. Catalogue of the Exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, November 19, 1977, through February 12, 1978* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art; in association with Princeton University Press, 1979), 309.

[11] Ainalov, *The Hellenistic Origins of Byzantine Art*, 239-240.

possibly sixth century, depicting the enthroned Virgin and Child, with the original polychromed background of eight-pointed "stars" still intact.[12] Asher Ovadiah considered this daisy shape a version of the rosette and traced it back to ancient Mesopotamia.[13] J.B. Ward-Perkins called this motif "the marigold pattern," and claimed it cropped up on Visigothic sculpture sometime around 420, with the number of petals varying from six to ten.[14] Ricci could not decide if the motif in the Mausoleum was a daisy or a star.[15] Others have called it a flower without explanation.[16]

However, at least three of the shapes making up these floral forms have been used in contexts that would indicate they were often read as plant forms in Early Christian art. First is the trifoliated leaf surrounding the white and blue flower with squared-off petals. This form is often used for grape leaves in depictions of vines.[17] The second is the white and blue flower. A Ravennate example of this motif used as a flower can be seen at Sant'Apollinare Nuovo in the grass under the feet of St. Vitalis on the south wall.[18] Of course these mosaics are possibly 100 years later than those of the Mausoleum, but the idea

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[12] *Ibid.*, 264-267.
[13] Asher Ovadiah, *Geometric and Floral Patterns in Ancient Mosaics: a Study of Their Origin in the Mosaics from the Classical Period to the Age of Augustus* (Rome: "L-Erma" di Bretschneider, 1980), 176-177.
[14] John Bryan Ward-Perkins, "The Sculpture of Visigothic France," *Archaeologia* 87 (1938): 95.
[15] Corrado Ricci, "Il sepolcro di Galla Placidia in Ravenna," *Bollettino d'arte del Ministero della pubblica istruzione* (Milan) (1914): 154.
[16] Pasi, "Notes," 216.
[17] Two pre-fifth century examples in mosaic are: the Christ Helios mosaic in the early fourth-century necropolis under the Basilica of St. Peter, Rome, and the wine-making mosaic in the Mausoleum of Santa Costanza, Rome, c. first half of the fourth century.
[18] Seen by the author on site, June 2000.

is that the motif was recognizable as a floral form. The third is the quatrefoil rosette. This is seen in a pastoral lunette in the San Aquilino Chapel in San Lorenzo, Milan, from the fifth century.[19] The rosette is used in another pastoral scene in the Constantinian Villa, Antioch, c. 325, and on the floor of the sixth-century Martyrion of Seleucia near Antioch, where it serves to create a naturalistic setting for the animals in that pavement.[20] The rosette is also used in context with other floral motifs in textiles of the fifth century.

Floral Forms: Meanings. Despite how the motifs of the north and south vault may appear to the 21st-century viewer (i.e., stars, snowflakes, flowers), it is important to understand that the fifth-century viewer could read them as flowers. Flowers carried with them quite a number of diverse meanings in the Late Antique world, one of which was funerary.

Funerary decorations show that flowers were a common motif for this context, especially during the first through third centuries C.E. The roots were in Roman pagan funerary practices, which continued into the Christian era. Actual fruit and flowers, especially violets and roses, were provided as offerings at tombs, and symbolized the eternal spring of life after death. The gravestone inscription for one pagan child read: "Here lies Optatus, a child noble and dutiful.

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[19] For illustration see Wladimiro Dorigo, *Late Roman Painting: A Study of Pictorial Records, 30 B.C.-A.D. 500* (New York: Praeger, 1971), color plates 27 and 28.
[20] For illustration see Katherine M. D. Dunbabin, *Mosaics of the Greek and Roman World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 181 fig. 193.

I pray that his ashes may become violets and roses...."[21] Paintings and stucco ornament depicting roses became a popular motif for the walls and vaults of tombs, seemingly perpetuating the offerings of actual flowers.[22] An example similar to the design in the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia appears in the Tomb of the Axe along the Via Appia in Rome dating to the second century C.E. Here is found stucco ornament, possibly originally polychromed, on the vaults showing a repeat pattern of quatrefoil rosettes in circles.[23]

Flowers, and roses specifically, were symbols of Spring, and it was this association that made them appropriate as funerary gifts with life-eternal implications. The *Florales*, a festival in honor of Flora, the pagan goddess of flowers and of women in childbirth, was celebrated from April 28th to May 2nd.[24] The Roman Feast of Roses, *Rosalia*, was held in May and June when roses were in season in the Mediterranean world.[25] By the fourth century, the *Rosalia* was so popular that it could have been the reason for the popularity of the rosette form. This motif has been found all over the Mediterranean world – from Antioch to Alexandria to Rome – in both mosaics and textiles dating from the fourth and

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[21] J.M.C. Toynbee, *Death and Burial in the Roman World* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1971), 37, who cites *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinorum* ix, 3184; the entire inscription in Latin is: *hic iacet Optatus pietatis nobilis infans cui precor ut cineres sint ia sintque rosae, terraque quae mater nunc est sibi sit levis oro namque gravis nulli vita fuit pueri.*
[22] *Ibid.*, 62-63.
[23] *Ibid.*, 134, and 112 plate 42.
[24] Salvatore Ciurca, *Mosaics of Villa "Erculia" in Piazza Armerina, Morgantina* (Bologna: Nicolò Maltese, s.d. [c. 1990]), 88; also T. P. Wiseman, "The Games of Flora," in Bettina Bergmann and Christine Kondoleon, ed. *The Art of Ancient Spectacle* (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art; dist. by Yale University Press, 1999), 195.
[25] Toynbee, *Death and Burial in the Roman World*, 63.

fifth centuries.[26] There are mosaics depicting both festivals in the fourth-century villa at Piazza Armerina, Sicily: in the Cubiculum of Musicians and Actors is depicted the *Florales*, and the *Rosalia* is shown in the Cubiculum of the Children's Hunt.[27]

In addition to the flowers of the north and south vaults, other flora seen in the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia are flowers in the lower window frames of the south and west arms (fig. 9), the wreaths surrounding the Christological monogram of the east and west barrel vaults (fig. 11), and the fruit-laden garland of the soffit of the north arm (fig. 12). Wreaths and garlands of fruit or flowers were used as decorations for funerary events. Garlands were hung on the platforms of imperial Roman funerary pyres.[28] Pagan funerary altars, tombs, and mausolea were covered in laurel wreaths and fruit swags; these festoons were later translated into stone.[29] Depictions of garlands and wreaths were carried over into Christian funerary contexts such as decorations for sarcophagi and catacombs. Examples from Rome include the niche mosaics of the fourth-century Mausoleum of Santa Costanza which are bordered by a fruit-laden garland, and Cubiculum O of the catacomb of the Via Latina, c. 350-400, which

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[26] Christine Kondoleon, "Timing Spectacles: Roman Domestic Art and Performance," in Bergmann and Kondoleon, ed. *The Art of Ancient Spectacle*, 335 on the *Rosalia*; 341 note 74 lists several mosaics from North African villas which contain the rosette motif.
[27] Ciurca, *Mosaics of Villa "Erculia"*, 88, 92-93 figures and text.
[28] Toynbee, *Death and Burial in the Roman World*, 61; Robert Turcan, "Les guirlandes dans l'antiquité classique," *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* 14 (1971): 126-128.
[29] Toynbee, *Death and Burial in the Roman World*, 265-266, 272.

has a painted garland sprouting from baskets at either end, similar to the garland motif found in the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia.[30]

The garland with various fruits, such as is seen in the Mausoleum, could also indicate the four seasons.[31] The roots of this symbolism may lie in the Jewish Festival of the Tabernacles, *Sukkot*, where tents were decorated with garlands and wreaths in celebration of the harvest.[32] The garland or wreath containing lilies and roses, wheat, grapes, and olives, i.e., plants representing the four seasons, can be seen in decoration as early as the paintings of the Dura Europos baptistery, and in mosaic in the fifth-century chapel of San Vittore in Ciel d'Oro, Milan, surrounding the bust of St. Victor.[33] While these garlands suggest the passage of time, Choricius, describing the mosaic fruit trees decorating the Church of St. Sergius in Gaza (c. 530), suggests the timelessness of that fruit: "they blossom in all seasons, do not wilt in the winter, and have no need of rain."[34] The fruiting garland in the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia suggests that the

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[30] André Grabar, *The Beginnings of Christian Art, 200-395* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1967), 225-234, fig. 256; 188; 192 fig. 207.
[31] Ricci, "Il sepolcro di Galla Placidia in Ravenna," 154-155, who lists the fruits on the garland in the Mausoleum as figs, apples or quince, cherries, pears, pomegranates, and grapes. However, there are eight fruits on this garland. Peaches and nectarines are possibly the other fruits. The identities of all the fruits are uncertain – although some are more obvious than others, such as the figs – but Ricci's identifications imply that only summer and autumn fruits are represented.
[32] Gillian Vallance Mackie, "The Early Medieval Chapel: Decoration, Form, and Function. A Study of Chapels in Italy and Istria in the Period between 313 and 741 AD (Ravenna, Milan, Rome)" (Ph.D. diss., University Of Victoria (Canada), 1991), 112; personal email correspondence with Sharon Kasser, January 26, 2001; Jane Merriam deVyver, "The Skēnē: a Universal Symbol of the Divine Presence: Perspectives on the Form and Function of a Symbol" (Ph.D. diss., Michigan State University, 1981), 17-22. Harvest-oriented symbolism would account for the fruit of the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia being from the summer and fall seasons.
[33] Maguire, *Earth and Ocean*, 13; Mackie, "The Early Medieval Chapel," 112.
[34] The original source is *Laudatio Marciani*, I, 35-36. Quoted in Ainalov, *The Hellenistic Origins of Byzantine Art*, 198; and Cyril Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453: Sources and Documents* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986, reprinted 1993), 60-63.

memory of the dead would not be forgotten even with the passing of time, and at the same time symbolizes the eternal life of the Christian in heaven.

A custom imported from Greece around the second century C.E. was that of funerary gardens. These gardens located in private cemeteries were considered sacred places by the Romans. These would be planted with fruit and other trees, flowers, and grapevines, and included garden architecture such as walls, wells, pools, and dining buildings.[35] Hence, grapevines became important motifs in pagan funerary art, and these motifs continued into the Christian era because of the associations with the Eucharist and the sacrificial blood of Christ. A third-century tomb in the catacombs under San Sebastiano, Rome, depicts in stucco a vine trellis growing out of vases at the base of the groins of the ceiling.[36] A fourth-century martyrium located in a Christian house, the Casa Celimontana, has barrel-vaulted spaces painted with grapevines growing out of acanthus leaves.[37] A similar arrangement is seen in the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia, where the gold grapevines framing all four vaults grow from acanthus leaves at the intersections of the upper lunettes, and the grapevines encircling the little prophets of the east and west vaults also sprout from acanthus plants. The acanthus plant was used either in combination with the grapevine or by itself. Examples of the latter include funerary contexts such as in the Lying-in-State

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[35] Evidence for these gardens is from sepulchral inscriptions; see Toynbee, *Death and Burial in the Roman World*, 95, 97-98. See also Turcan, "Les guirlandes dans l'antiquité classique," 127.
[36] Doro Levi, *Antioch Mosaic Pavements* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1947), 509.
[37] Ainalov, *The Hellenistic Origins of Byzantine Art*, 187-188; J.P. Kirsch, "Sts. John and Paul," *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 8 (1910). Online ed. (1999). http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08443a.htm (13 July 2001).

relief of the Tomb of the Haterii, c. 100 C.E., and the third-century Cappella Graeca in the Catacomb of Priscilla, Rome.[38] In the Mausoleum, the designs on the east and west vaults are also examples of the inhabited scroll, a design used in funerary art since at least the first century C.E.[39] The use of blue for the background of the east and west vaults as well as for the grapevines framing the vaults mimics the blue of the sky peaking through a fruiting arbor, as if to imitate a fruiting grape arbor in the garden of the dead.[40]

FUNERARY BANQUETS

An ancient Roman custom, which was adopted by Christian Romans, was to celebrate feasts in memory of the dead. Commemorative feasts took place on the third, ninth, and fortieth day after a person's death, and an annual feast was held every February.[41] The purpose of the funerary gardens was to replenish decorations and offerings, as well as food for these funerary feasts. Grapevines were cultivated to produce wine for the feasts. The depiction of funerary feasts

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[38] John Bodel, "Death on Display: Looking at Roman Funerals," in Bergmann and Kondoleon, ed. *The Art of Ancient Spectacle*, 267; Pierre du Bourguet, *Early Christian Painting*, trans. Simon Watson Taylor (New York: The Viking Press, 1965), 58.
[39] J.M.C. Toynbee and J. B. Ward-Perkins, "Peopled Scrolls: a Hellenistic Motif in Imperial Art," *Papers of the British School at Rome* 18 (1950): 17. For the inhabited scroll in general see also Claudine Dauphin, "The development of the 'inhabited scroll' in architectural sculpture and mosaic art from Late Imperial times to the seventh century A.D.," *Levant. Journal of the British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem* 19 (1987): 183-213.
[40] Dauphin, "The development of the 'inhabited scroll'," 184; Mackie, "The Early Medieval Chapel," 169-170.
[41] Peter Brown, "Late Antiquity," in *A History of Private Life*, vol. 1. *From Pagan Rome to Byzantium*, ed. Philippe Ariès and Georges Duby (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1987), 220, 282-283; Molly Teasdale Smith, "The Development of the Altar Canopy in Rome," *Rivista di archeologia cristiana* 50, nos. 1-4 (1974): 396-397. Antigone Samellas, *Death in the Eastern Mediterranean (50-600 A.D.): the Christianization of the East: an*

can be seen in art, especially of the second to fourth centuries C.E., in various media, including sculpture and mosaic. A second century sculpture from a sarcophagus depicts a woman reclining on a dining couch while a servant brings her food.[42] A funerary mosaic from Thaenae (Thina) in Tunisia, c. second-fourth centuries, shows two banqueters lying on their respective couches while baskets of roses are offered to them.[43] In both of these artworks garlands are hung in the space above the feasters. Other depictions show several people feasting. A catacomb painting in the cemetery of Praetextatus depicts Vicentius and six of his Christian friends banqueting on fish and bread.[44] A late-fourth-century mosaic from a necropolis near Antioch shows a funerary banquet attended by three women with three servants, all before a curtain.[45]

The curtain hanging behind the women is a reminder that canopies were a common part of the dining experience in the Roman world.[46] The pattern of the north and south vaults has been shown to have links to patterns in textiles. When the ideas of the funerary garden, the funerary banquet, and this link to textiles are combined, the result extends the funerary meaning of the

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Interpretation, Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum, 12 (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002), 279.

[42] The sculpture is from the Museé d'Art et d'Histoire, Geneva. For illustration see "Funerary banquet" (rom09067), WorldArt image database (San Jose, California: California State University). http://worldart.sjsu.edu/Obj27334$1092*187367 (19 July 2003).

[43] See Dunbabin, *Mosaics of the Greek and Roman World*, 313, and Abdelaziz Driss, *Il Fantastico nei Mosaici de Tunisia* (Rome: Lerici, c. 1960s), 139-142.

[44] From c. second century, in the Vibia Cave, Rome. See drawing of this painting in Turcan, "Les guirlandes dans l'antiquité classique," 120 fig. 2.

[45] "Mosaic of a Funerary Symposium" (catalog entry 9), in Christine Kondoleon, *Antioch: The Lost Ancient City* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 121.

[46] See the discussion regarding canopies in Appendix 2 of this paper.

Mausoleum. While all the discrete ornamental elements in the north and south vaults can be shown to represent actual flora, at the same time they can be shown to represent a textile: both the marguerite and the rosette and indeed many other floral motifs, were common motifs in fifth century textiles, and the repeat pattern was a common design composition for textiles. In the context of the Mausoleum the north and south vaults represent the canopy over a funerary feast.

Depictions of funerary events in art show that the canopy had been associated with indigenous Italian funerary customs for centuries. A relief from Amiternum, c. 50 B.C.E. or later, depicts a funeral procession. The deceased lies on a couch on a bier. Behind him is what appears to be a screen, but what may in fact be a canopy displayed vertically so as to show the pattern of stars and spirals.[47] Centuries earlier the Etruscans used tents for the prothesis, or lying-in-state of the dead.[48] Such a tent was depicted in paint inside the Tomb of the Monkey, Chiusi, c. fifth century B.C.E., where a round fringed canopy structure is painted in the center of the ceiling of the tomb.[49] The painted decoration of the Tomba del Cacciatore in Tarquinia, c. 510-500 B.C.E., depicts an elaborate wooden tented structure covered in patterned fabrics.[50] The north and south

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[47] Bodel, "Death on Display," 263-265; and Toynbee, *Death and Burial in the Roman World*, 46, and 30 plate 11. The relief is housed in the Museo dell'Aquila, Italy.
[48] Mario Torelli, "Funera Tusca: Reality and representation in archaic Tarquinian painting," in Bergmann and Kondoleon, ed. *The Art of Ancient Spectacle*, 153.
[49] Levi, *Antioch Mosaic Pavements*, 449 note 167; Karl Lehmann, "The Dome of Heaven," *Art Bulletin* 27, no. 1 (March 1945): 2 fig. 2.
[50] Gillian Vallance Mackie, *Early Christian Chapels in the West: Decoration, Function, and Patronage* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), 207 and fig. 105.

vaults of the Mausoleum may be evoking local funerary customs where canopies were placed over the dead body as it lay in state.

MEMORIA (MARTYRS' TOMBS)

Another textile-related motif of the Mausoleum is the ribbon seen bordering the upper lunettes (fig. 1). A notable association of the floating ribbon motif is its presence in funerary contexts. The Lying-in-State relief of the Tomb of the Haterii, c. 100 C.E. shows decorations on the walls of the room of the deceased. These include shell canopies, garlands strung between columns, and ribbons which are either tied to the columns or tied to the garlands.[51] Another relief sculpture, in ivory, on the Pola Casket c. 400, depicts the baldachin over the Tomb of St. Peter in the Vatican. Attached to the tops of the twisted columns and criss-crossing the space above are what appear to be two ribbons, or some other form of stretched textile.[52] A fourth-century lead medallion depicting the martyrdom of St. Lawrence on the obverse, depicts a similar baldachin structure on the reverse with ribbons also draped between the columns.[53] The ribbons outlining the upper lunettes of the Mausoleum seem to be indicating such a baldachin-like memorial space.

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[51] See illustration in Bodel, "Death on Display," 258, where the sculpted ribbons can be seen albeit worn down and very faint.
[52] Frederik Van der Meer, *Early Christian Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), 134; and Weitzmann, ed. *Age of Spirituality (Catalogue)*, 595.
[53] Pictured in Weitzmann, ed. *Age of Spirituality (Catalogue)*, 566; and discussed in Gillian Vallance Mackie, "New Light on the So-called Saint Lawrence Panel at the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia, Ravenna," *Gesta* 29, no.1 (1990): 55.

MEANDER AS FUNERARY MOTIF

The three-dimensional colored meander seen in the soffit of the south vault (figs. 1 and 6), while originally a Hellenistic motif, was also associated with Christian sites and funerary contexts. A mid-to-late-fourth century Christian mausoleum of possible imperial origin in Centcelles, Spain, contains a similar meander painted in a band around the base of its dome.[54] The third-century hypogeum of Santa Maria in Stelle at Val Pantena near Verona, Italy, also has a polychrome perspectival meander used as a dividing border in a fresco. This building was originally a funerary structure and was converted to a Christian chapel in the fifth century.[55] Another underground tomb, dated to the third century and located in a necropolis at Palmyra, also utilized a three-dimensional meander as a border element.[56]

SALVATION

The presence of images of the martyr St. Lawrence, the Gospel books, and the Good Shepherd all indicate a theme of salvation in the Mausoleum. Motifs relating to baptism, such as the stags-at-water, the white clothing of the apostles, and the possible association of the bird above the apostles with the

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[54] This building is purported to be the mausoleum of Constantine's son Constans I. See Toynbee, *Death and Burial in the Roman World*, 161-163; Grabar, *The Beginnings of Christian Art*, 192; and Dunbabin, *Mosaics of the Greek and Roman World*, 251-253.
[55] Dorigo, *Late Roman Painting*, 258-259.
[56] This tomb is called Magharat el-Djelideh. See Levi, *Antioch Mosaic Pavements*, 550; and Morey, *Early Christian Art*, fig. 18, 263. A comparison of the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia and this tomb would be a worthy subject of analysis, as the motifs used in both are quite similar.

eagle, suggest the salvation of the soul through the death of the sinner. The Apocalyptic motifs also relate to salvation with the promise of salvation at the end of time. As salvation is a strong theme throughout the Mausoleum, it is useful idea to explore the vista seen immediately upon entering the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia (fig. 1).

The three-dimensional polychrome meander, a motif unique in the Mausoleum in that it is not mirrored in any of the other vaults, draws attention to the theme of salvation by framing the arm of the Mausoleum containing the lunette of St. Lawrence and the Gospel books. This use of the meander had its counterpart in illuminated manuscripts where arches with similar meanders were used as framing devices for Gospel canon tables. One of the first known examples of this motif is in a sixth-century manuscript from northern Italy which has a three-dimensional meander. The most famous use of this device is in the Rabbula Gospels of 586. In both of these examples the arch with the meander springs from Corinthian-style capitals, i.e., capitals made of acanthus, and frames the columns of text.[57] Upon entering the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia one of the first views is of the three-dimensional polychrome meander in the soffit of the south vault, stretched between each of the acanthus motifs at the junctures of the vaults, framing the lunette which contains the cabinet with the four Gospel books. This combination of motifs appears to have been organized purposely to

[57] The sixth-century northern Italian example is British Library Harley MS 1775. This device continued to be used in Carolingian manuscripts. See Betty Al-Hamdani, "The Fate of the Perspectival Meander in Roman Mosaics and Its Sequels," *Cahiers archéologiques* 43 (1995):

emphasize the salvational aspect of the Gospels. Possibly then, this combination was translated in small scale for use in the arts of illumination.

APOCALYPTIC MOTIFS

Motifs relating to the Book of Revelation are abundant in the Mausoleum. These include the cross and four Living Creatures in the dome, the white robes and the raised hands of the apostles, and the Christological monogram with the alpha and omega. Some ornamental mosaics can also be seen as having Apocalyptic themes, including the three-dimensional polychrome meander of the south soffit, the pattern of small crenellated green rectangles in the soffits of the east and west arms, and the textile nature of the pattern seen on the north and south vaults.

THREE-DIMENSIONAL POLYCHROME MEANDER: THE NEW JERUSALEM

Interspersed amongst the swastikas of the polychrome meander of the south soffit are squares; the colors used in the pattern are white, blue, green, orange/red, and buff/gold. Possibly this is a reference to the New Jerusalem of the Book of Revelation.[58] According to Revelation 21:16-20, "the plan of the city

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41-43. For the Rabbula Gospels see Kurt Weitzmann, *Late Antique and Early Christian Book Illumination* (New York: George Braziller, 1977), plate 35.

[58] Martinelli, "I mosaici," 153, mentions this idea in passing. Al-Hamdani, "The Fate of the Perspectival Meander," 56 note 46, also notes that a fresco from the 1190s in San Giovanni a Porta Latina, Rome depicts both a three-dimensional arcade and a three-dimensional (i.e., perspectival) meander in the apse above the heads of the 24 Apocalyptic Elders, which "might

is perfectly square, its length the same as its breadth...The foundations of the city wall [are] faced with all kinds of precious stone."[59] While these foundations are faced with twelve types of stone, the color groups represented are only five: white/clear, blue, green, red/purple, and yellow.[60] Revelation 21:12-14 indicates that there are twelve gates and twelve foundational stones in the walls of the New Jerusalem. There are 24 full squares depicted in the meander of the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia, possibly representing these two aspects of the walls of the New Jerusalem.

EAST AND WEST SOFFITS: THE APOCALYPTIC RAINBOW

Another Apocalyptic motif is found in the soffits of the arches of the east and west vaults. This is probably one of the most overlooked patterns in scholarship on the Mausoleum. It has been described as a pattern of "extremely stylised leaves" (Pasi), a grid (Bovini), and a pattern of scales (Ricci, Deichmann's *Schuppenmuster*, and Bovini's *squame*).[61] Doro Levi considered patterns such as this part of the Late Antique "rainbow style," motifs which used

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perhaps be meant to be read as the walls of the celestial Jerusalem." As in Rev. 21:12, "at each of the twelve gates there was an angel," this meander contains angelic heads within its voids.

[59] Unless stated otherwise, all Biblical quotes are from Alexander Jones, ed., *The Jerusalem Bible*, Reader's ed. (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1966-1968), with separate pagination for the Old Testament and the New Testament.

[60] See Rev. 21:19-20. The precious stones are: diamond (clear), lapis lazuli (blue), turquoise (blue or green), crystal (clear), agate (white), ruby (red), gold quartz (yellow), malachite (green), topaz (gold or blue), emerald (green), sapphire (blue), and amethyst (purple or reddish purple). Janes, *God and Gold in Late Antiquity*, 61, discusses the idea that gold and gems were important both in Early Byzantine art as well as in the Scriptures.

[61] See summary in Pasi, "Notes," 221; also Giuseppe Bovini, *Églises de Ravenne* (Novara: Istituto geografico De Agostini, 1960), 155.

colored bands in either a gradation of dark to light hues, or separate colors arranged in parallel or zig-zag lines or squares.[62] There is evidence that Levi is not incorrect in his use of the word "rainbow" for these gradations as well as color juxtapositions. In reviewing the textual resources from the Late Antique period, Elizabeth James has shown that in contrast to the modern vision of the rainbow – that which is created by the seven hues of the color spectrum – Byzantine literature reflects several conceptions of the rainbow. One example she calls "naturalistic" since it is used in literature to describe the phenomenon that occurs in nature. This is made up of a multiplicity of hues, based on the Aristotelian primary colors of green, red, and purple, plus blue and yellow. However, the Byzantine conception of color was not as the modern eye sees it today, i.e., with the emphasis on hue. James' re-translation of some of these texts reveals that in the original sense of the color terminology what was important was the value relationship between colors, their relative lightness and darkness. For example, blue and red were not different because of hue, but because blue might be perceived as darker than red. James terms "non-naturalistic" the rainbow used in divine contexts. These are described in terms of brightness and did not emphasize a multiplicity of hues. Hence a Byzantine rainbow in art might be one where there is a gradation in values of several colors, or a gradation in values in one color; it was the relativity that was important.[63]

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[62] Levi borrowed this term from the art historical scholarship of manuscript illumination; Levi, *Antioch Mosaic Pavements*, 378, 406-407.

[63] James, "Colour and the Byzantine Rainbow," especially 70-80 (*supra* note 2). See also Philip Ball, *Bright Earth: Art and the Invention of Color* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2001),

What can be seen in the east and west soffits of the Mausoleum, then, are depictions of the non-naturalistic, or divine, type of rainbow, where the main element is the change of value using minimal hue. Each soffit is made up of squares with colors gradating from light to dark, the eastern side using blue and green, and the western side using green.

Rainbows are mentioned only four times in the Bible; one of these references is in the Book of Revelation: "and I saw a throne standing in heaven.... There was a rainbow encircling the throne, and this looked like an emerald" (Rev. 4:2-3). By the sixth century, commentaries on the Apocalypse discussed this emerald-like rainbow.[64] It is possible that the green bow-shaped decoration on the east and west soffits of the Mausoleum is the rainbow of the Apocalypse. The pattern fits the Byzantine artistic conventions of the rainbow and not the modern concept; this is possibly why the link has not been made before. This connection is strengthened when taken in context as each of the rainbows frames the lunette with the stags at water. The association could be made with the reference in chapter 22, verse 1 of the Book of Revelation where

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15-16, who explains that the idea of the color spectrum as a scale of light and dark goes back to the ancient Greeks: "The reliance of medieval scholars on classical Greek texts ensured that this color scale was perpetuated for centuries."

[64] See James, "Colour and the Byzantine Rainbow," 75, for the other biblical references to rainbows; on 77 she discusses Byzantine (sixth century and later) commentaries on the Apocalyptic rainbow. Oecumenius made a distinction between the many-colored natural rainbow and the emerald-like spiritual rainbow of the Apocalypse. However, James incorrectly places Oecumenius in the sixth century; he was writing in the late 10th-early 11th centuries. He did rely on older writings of the Church Fathers, including those from the fourth to sixth centuries, so it is possible that the foundations of his writings on the Apocalypse were of Late Antique origin. Andreas of Caesarea, another writer mentioned by James, was from the sixth century. See Adrian Fortescue, "Œcumenius", *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 11 (1911). Online ed. (1999). http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11214b.htm (8 August 2001).

the River of Life rises from the Throne of God.[65] Viewing this decoration of the soffit as an emerald rainbow fits in with the Apocalyptic theme of the Mausoleum.

NORTH AND SOUTH VAULTS: THE APOCALYPTIC TABERNACLE

In Revelation 11:19 John saw "the sanctuary of God in heaven opened, and the ark of the covenant could be seen inside it." Later in his vision, "the sanctuary, the Tent of the Testimony, opened in heaven" once again (Rev. 15:5). The Testimony is the word of God given to Moses in Exodus, and the Tent refers to the structure, known as the Tabernacle, God commanded Moses to build to house the Testimony.[66] The vision of the Apocalyptic Tabernacle prefigures the return of Christ and the coming of the New Jerusalem.[67]

At the end of Revelation the implication is that the Tabernacle of God, which is also the dwelling place of God[68], will be part of the city of the New Jerusalem:

> I saw the holy city, and the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven ... Then I heard a loud voice call from the throne, 'You see this city? Here God lives among men. He will make his home among them; they shall be his people, and he will be their God; ... He will wipe away all tears from their eyes; there will be no more death, and no more mourning or sadness.' (Rev. 21:2-4)

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[65] Maguire, *Earth and Ocean*, 78 makes reference to the river theme as found in San Vitale.
[66] See Exodus 24-28.
[67] William Seston, "Le jugement dernier au Mausolée de Galla Placidia," *Cahiers archéologiques* I (1945): 47.
[68] See deVyver, "The Skēnē," 24-27, who discusses the biblical use of the word *skēnē* to refer to both the Tabernacle and the dwelling place of God.

Could the north and south vaults of the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia, with their textile-like pattern, represent the Apocalyptic Tabernacle? Bishop Ambrose of Milan, Galla Placidia's mentor, believed flowers to represent Christ's coming: "Before His coming it is winter; after His coming there are flowers where before there were thorns."[69] The presence of the starry sky in the dome associates the tented space described by the north and south vaults of the Mausoleum with the heavens: In the second temple of Jerusalem, the veil separating the tabernacle from the Holy of Holies, the dwelling place of God, was a tapestry embroidered with an image of the heavens.[70] According to Isaiah 40:22, God "lives above the circle of the earth ... He has stretched out the heavens like a cloth, spread them like a tent for men to live in."[71] In the Late Antique era, the canopy was also used as a symbol of authority.[72] Possibly, then, the tented space of the flower-filled north and south vaults is meant to represent the dwelling house of God on earth after the second coming. This would also provide a message of hope in a funerary chapel, that "there will be no more death, and no more mourning or sadness."

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[69] Mary Theresa Springer, *Nature Imagery in the Works of Saint Ambrose*, Patristic studies, vol. 30 (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America, 1931), 61, quoting from *De Isaac et Anima* 4.35.

[70] See Margaret Barker, "Beyond the Veil of the Temple: The High Priestly Origin of the Apocalypses," *Scottish Journal of Theology*, 51, no. 1 (1998):1-21, http://www.marquette.edu/maqom/veil (19 Feb. 2003), and David Ulansey, "The Heavenly Veil Torn: Mark's Cosmic *Inclusio*," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 110, no. 1 (spring 1991): 123-25, http://www.well.com/user/davidu/veil.html (19 Feb. 2003).

[71] See the discussion of the Christian adoption of this Jewish belief in Smith, *The Dome*, 86-87.

[72] See Appendix 2 of this paper.

IMPERIAL MOTIFS

Some elements in the mosaics of the Mausoleum, such as the garb of Christ the Good Shepherd and the raised-hand gesture of the apostles, make direct references to imperial practices. Yet, it is the ornamental mosaics more so than the figural that create an atmosphere of imperiality, wealth, and power in the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia. The ornamental motifs intensify the link to imperiality, and hence imperial patronage, with references to imperial practices, the imperially-sponsored Orthodox Church, and aristocratic fashions and tastes.

IMPERIAL NATURE: INTRODUCTION

The Edict of Milan of 313, made Christianity the official religion of the empire by law. After that, the Late Antique Orthodox Church and Roman Empire had a symbiotic relationship. While the empire was constantly under attack by foreigners, the church was constantly under attack by heretical sects.[73] Often these two went together, for example, the Visigoths and Ostrogoths who sacked Italy and Rome were Arians.

During the fifth century, with this integration of religion and politics, patrons used artworks in a propagandistic way, fusing themes of imperial and divine power.[74] The nature imagery in the Mausoleum serves this dual function of political propaganda and religious doctrine.

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[73] Clementina Rizzardi, "Il Mausoleo nel mundo culturale e artistico di Galla Placidia" (The Mausoleum in the cultural-artistic world of Galla Placidia), in Rizzardi, ed. *Il Mausoleo*, 112-113.
[74] *Ibid.*, 123.

Imperial Nature: Political. The presence of wreaths and garlands of fruit or flowers has already been linked to Late Antique funerary practices. However, these decorations were also used in Late Antique imperial celebrations. Flowers were used like confetti in Late Roman victory celebrations, and were also strung in garlands for street decorations. For imperial processions through the streets of a city, such as the emperor's entry into a city, the *adventus*, or the emperor's accession to the throne, the route would be draped with all sorts of decorations, including the greenery of garlands and wreaths.[75] The interior of the Mausoleum, profusely decorated with floral motifs, emulates the type of environment befitting an imperial ceremony.

The version of the acanthus seen in the stags-at-water scene of the east and west lunettes, as well as at the base of the corners of the upper lunettes, has been regarded as a direct descendent of the acanthus scrolls of classical Roman art, such as can be found on the *Ara Pacis* of Augustus, c. 13 B.C.E.[76] The vegetation of the *Ara Pacis*, the Altar of Peace, has been interpreted as being symbolic of the abundance and prosperity that come with political peace. This meaning continued into the Late Antique era. According to Henry Maguire, textiles with themes of nature were illustrations of the prosperity brought by

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[75] Michael McCormick, *Eternal Victory: Triumphal Rulership in Late Antiquity, Byzantium, and the Early Medieval West* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 205; 18-19 for the victory celebration for Clodius Pupienus Maximus, 238 C.E.; and 84-86 for Constantine's entry into Rome in 312; also Ammianus Marcellinus, *Rerum gestarum libri qui supersunt*, Loeb Classical Library (1950-1952), 2:133 for Julianus Augustus' entry into Sirmium, c. 361.

[76] This is generally accepted; however, Doro Levi, *Antioch Mosaic Pavements*, 503, completely disagrees with the classical roots of the acanthus in the deer lunette because of the "schematization" of the Mausoleum's acanthus.

abundance and plenty. Nature motifs representing abundance became fashionable, and appeared especially in domestic decorations and textiles.[77] Imagery symbolizing abundance and plenty, prosperity and peace was in stark contrast to the reality of the constant threat to the borders of the empire by the Visigoths, Vandals, and Huns. Indeed, Italy had been invaded in recent memory, in 401 and again in 409.[78] The use of nature motifs in the Mausoleum can be seen as a propagandistic means of promoting the idea of peace and prosperity under the Roman Empire in the face of foreign raids against Italy.

Imperial Nature: Religious. Extending this message, nature imagery indicated prosperity under the peace of Christ advanced by the imperially-sponsored Orthodox Church. The writings of the early Church Fathers included commentaries and sermons on the Creation, the *Hexaēmeron*, which included profuse nature imagery. This body of literature may have provided the bridge for the formerly pagan motifs of flora and fauna being acceptable in Christian environments, and corresponds in time to the Early Christian use of flora and fauna for decoration, i.e., the fourth to the sixth centuries. This sort of decoration has been interpreted as indicating the Edenic pastoral peace under Christ the

[77] Dominic Janes, *God and Gold in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 97; Henry Maguire, "Garments Pleasing to God: the Significance of Domestic Textile Designs in the Early Byzantine Period," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 44 (1990): 217.
[78] Michael Grant, *History of Rome* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1978), 427-430.

Good Shepherd, and, especially in a funerary context, had paradisiacal implications.[79]

Deichmann and others saw the depictions of nature in the Mausoleum as being part of the "cosmic unity," an idea expressed by the Orthodox Bishop Ambrose: "All nature testifies to the Unity of God." Deichmann saw the Unity of God as being represented by the cross in the dome that appears above the natural world, a world composed not only of flora and fauna, but of the four elements which make up the human body. According to Deichmann's reading of Ambrose, these four elements are fire (the grill of the St. Lawrence lunette), earth (the rocky cliff of the Good Shepherd lunette), water (seen in the stag lunettes and in the vases of the doves), and air (indicated by the starry heaven and by the doves and eagles).[80] Hence, in the Mausoleum there is a strong Orthodox message wherein these motifs in mosaic explicitly represent the natural world over which God reigns.

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[79] Patrizia Angiolini Martinelli, "I mosaici: l'immagine da presenza scenica a suggestione simbolica" (The Mosaics: the Image from Scenic Presence to Symbolic Suggestion), in Rizzardi, ed. *Il Mausoleo*, 163; Maguire, *Earth and Ocean*, generally, 17, and 83. It should also be noted that Galla Placidia's mentor, St. Ambrose of Milan, wrote a *Hexaëmeron*.

[80] St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, "Exposition of the Christian Faith. Book 1. Chapter 4, 31" [unity of God], and "Exposition of the Christian Faith. Book 2. Introduction, 12" [four elements], in *Early Church Fathers. Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, ser. 2, vol. 10. Online ver. 2.0. W. Harry Plantinga, website general ed. http://www.ccel.org/fathers2/ (28 June 2001); Friedrich Wilhelm Deichmann, *Ravenna: Hauptstadt des spätantiken Abendlandes*, vol. 1, *Geschichte und Monumente* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1969), 164 on "kosmische Einheit" and the four elements; Martinelli, "I mosaici," 150-151.

IMPERIAL FASHIONS AND TASTES: LUXURY

During the Late Antique era, the garments of the aristocracy and imperial ranks were colorful and flowery, with elaborate ornamentation such as gold embroidery and jewels. The use of elaborate textiles extended to interior spaces, both domestic and ecclesiastical. As early as the time of Constantine, the Roman emperor was expected to dress in lavish costume and jewels[81] and such fashion became symbolic of the emperor, the imperial family, and the empire. The Theodosian imperial family continued this style in clothing and decorative arts in the fourth and fifth centuries.[82]

According to Joseph Merriman, during the fourth century, the elite of Constantinople became obsessed with emulating the culture of Rome.[83] Rome was held up as the apogee of culture and style to the citizens of the New Rome, the new capitol of the Roman Empire, Constantinople. The new elite copied the Roman penchant for display of status,[84] however, without the Roman sophistication that came with the security of centuries of tradition. The

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[81] See Eusebius' comment: "he skillfully arranges for their [i.e., jewels] use out of regard for his subjects' sense of proper style" quoted in Harold Allen Drake, *In Praise of Constantine: a Historical Study and New Translation of Eusebius' Tricennial Orations*, University of California Publications, Classical Studies, vol. 15 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 90 and 162 note 13.

[82] For example see the decoration on the Missorium of Theodosius, from 388, catalog no. 64, in Weitzmann, ed. *Age of Spirituality (Catalogue)*, 74-76.

[83] Joseph Francis Merriman, "Aristocratic and Imperial Patronage of the Decorative Arts in Rome and Constantinople, A.D. 337-395: The Role of Sculpture, Painting, Mosaics, and the Minor Arts in Fourth-Century Society" (Ph.D. diss., University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, 1975), 116 and generally.

[84] This had been manifested in the Roman Empire in such activities as displays of taste and wealth at dinner parties, or displays of strength and talent at games and spectacles. See generally Bergmann and Kondoleon, ed. *The Art of Ancient Spectacle*.

acquisition and display of luxury items became the Late Antique aristocratic style and hence symbolic of wealth and power.[85]

What resulted was a "cultural rivalry"[86] between Constantinople and Rome, and later Ravenna. As an Italian city Ravenna could maintain close ties to the traditions of Rome. Yet when it became capital of the western empire in 402, Ravenna was a provincial Roman town and had to quickly become an imperial cosmopolitan city.[87] The fifth-century elite of Ravenna had to take their lead from Constantinople in creating symbols of status and power. In the Mausoleum the mosaics of the east and west vaults and the borders of all the four vaults emulate the gold embroidery of fine clothing. The floral style of the north and south vaults mimics the floral style of expensive silk garments. The colors of the east, west, and south soffits sparkle like the jewelry of the emperor. Gold shines down from the stars and cross in the dome. The ornamental mosaics make the statement that the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia is undeniably an imperial foundation.[88]

IMPERIAL FASHIONS AND TASTES: EASTERN STYLES

Beyond their golden and bejeweled display of luxury, the mosaics of the Mausoleum reveal a direct concern with fashionable motifs and patterns of the

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[85] See Janes, *God and Gold in Late Antiquity*, generally for a discussion of the aristocratic style.
[86] Merriman, "Aristocratic and Imperial Patronage of the Decorative Arts," 169.
[87] Rizzardi, "Il Mausoleo nel mundo culturale e artistico di Galla Placidia," 109.
[88] Most likely the interior space would have also been decorated with equally luxurious liturgical and other portable objects.

day emanating from the style centers of the east. Certainly Constantinople was one of those centers, however most of its art has been lost. Most scholars turn to the mosaics of Antioch as indicative of the styles popular in the capital. The predominant features of the mosaics of Antioch are the use of repeat patterns, floral motifs, the rainbow style, and Persian-style motifs. The Mausoleum displays all of these features in its mosaics. By using such fashionable motifs, the imperial patron of the Mausoleum was asserting links to the imperial center of the east, Constantinople, and its fashions, tastes, and styles.

With their floral motifs and repeat pattern the mosaics of the north and south vaults stand out as the most obvious links to the Antiochene mosaic style. The rainbow style was also popular amongst the Antiochene upper classes. Doro Levi's definition of the rainbow style encompasses several motifs in the Mausoleum. Not only the Apocalyptic rainbow of the soffits, but minor motifs such as the chevrons of the lower window frame on the east arm, the "ribbon wave" of the upper window frames,[89] and the more prominent flowing loose ribbon motif surrounding the upper lunettes.

The loose ribbon of the upper lunettes has a myriad of associations and meanings. Its two-tone shading effect puts it among the other rainbow style elements. Garlands and wreaths, funerary and celebratory, were often depicted as being tied with twisting, flowing ribbons.[90] Although the ribbon is an old motif,

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[89] Levi's term, see e.g. Levi, *Antioch Mosaic Pavements*, 377.

[90] This motif often appears in Greco-Roman sculptural relief especially associated with garlands. See Rainer Graefe, "Textile Schmuckformen an Fassaden und Dachern" (Textile ornamentation on facades and roofs), *Daidalos: Berlin Architectural Journal*, no. 29 (15 September 1988): 79.

going back to the Hellenistic period, it became quite popular in the fifth and sixth centuries in the eastern part of the Roman empire. The *pativ*, a loose ribbon often found around the necks of animals, was a common motif in Sassanian Persian art.[91] The prevalence of the motif in mosaics of Antioch, as well as its presence in the mosaics of the Great Palace of Constantinople,[92] show borrowing from the arts of Persia.[93] The Persian form of the ribbon is distinguished by thin ribbon-tendrils that float from the main ribbon, and this is the form of the motif seen at the Mausoleum.[94]

The use of these Antiochene and eastern motifs in the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia shows an understanding of current tastes and fashions of the eastern Roman Empire including the capital, Constantinople. This expression of style can be seen as a deliberate propagandistic tool to associate this building and its patron with imperial power and status. Fashion considerations were important to the imperial elite. The Mausoleum of Galla Placidia would have looked very different if the patron had not been concerned with creating a fashionable space, if instead the patron had made a determined effort to create a

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[91] For an example in mosaic see "Floor Mosaic of Beribboned Parrots," late fifth or early sixth century, catalogue no. 25, in Kondoleon, *Antioch*, 136-137.
[92] The date of which is in dispute, but probably sixth century. For illustration see Erdem Yücel, *The Great Palace Mosaic Museum* (Istanbul: A Turizm Yayinlari, 1988), 22.
[93] The Persians and Romans, who were constantly at war with each other, experienced a rare period of peace during the fifth century. See Anna Gonosová, "Exotic Taste: the Lure of Sasanian Persia," in Kondoleon, *Antioch*, 130.
[94] Levi, *Antioch Mosaic Pavements*, 483 note 350.

work of art using ornamentation that was stylistically older, more conservative, perhaps retrospective of the ancient glory of Rome.[95]

CONCLUSION

As was shown with the figural and emblematic mosaics of the Mausoleum, the ornamental mosaics also convey multiple meanings, a characteristic typical of Early Christian art. The same ornamental motif stood in for several different ideas: The three-dimensional polychrome meander represented a funerary setting, the walls of the New Jerusalem, or a frame for the Gospel books; the north and south vaults could be floral funerary decorations, the dining canopy at a funerary banquet, the Apocalyptic Tabernacle, or a display of high fashion.

Using the visual language of late antiquity, the ornamental mosaics of the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia reinforce and extend the meanings provided by the figural and emblematic mosaics. The ornamental mosaics represent funerary, salvational, Apocalyptic, and imperial themes. Can the ornamental mosaics also help to determine more clearly the patron and the original function of the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia? These implications will be considered next.

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[95] See Kitzinger, *Byzantine Art in the Making*, 13: "The patron emerges as an important factor – not, to be sure, in creating an artistic form, but in promoting it, in setting it up as a norm and charging it with new content. By making a choice of one style over another and using it for his own ends, the patron in effect influences the stylistic development."

CHAPTER 4, Part 2
The Meaning of the Decorative Mosaics: Patron and Function, and Conclusion

In the literature of the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia it is standard practice to preface the name of the monument with the phrase "so-called." This is because neither the function as a mausoleum nor the patronage of Galla Placidia has been definitively established by archaeological or historical textual sources. Most scholars have adopted the theories of the funerary purpose of the building and Galla Placidia as patron based on what historical evidence there is. The ornamental mosaics, in conjunction with the narrative mosaics, strengthen the theory of the patronage of Galla Placidia, and provide evidence that the Mausoleum was meant specifically to be an imperial mausoleum.

PATRON

That the Mausoleum was an imperial foundation has never been questioned. The use of decorative nature motifs, and the luxurious atmosphere created by the use of fashionable and jewel-like ornamental motifs supports the argument for the Mausoleum being of imperial patronage. Galla Placidia was a member of the imperial family, and was de facto ruler of the western Roman Empire for several years. Had she been the patron of a small funerary structure it no doubt would have contained ornament reflecting imperial status such as does the Mausoleum. Such a display of wealth, along with Orthodox-approved

themes, would have made a statement that Ravenna and the imperial house stationed there were on par with Constantinople and the eastern imperial regime: "This empress was well aware of the political capital to be gained by showing wealth and artistic magnificence ... [which] translates into power."[1]

The archaeological and historical evidence also points towards the patronage of Galla Placidia: she is said to have at least decorated Santa Croce to which the Mausoleum was attached; her name is linked to the San Zaccharias chapel as well as to the chapel dedicated to St. Nazarius, both of which were affiliated with Santa Croce; plus she remained in Ravenna during most of the second quarter of the fifth century during which time she had an extensive building campaign.

The ornamental motifs reveal additional clues in support of the patronage of Galla Placidia. Motifs in the mosaic programs of buildings that are without doubt Placidian foundations are similar to those seen in the Mausoleum, specifically the Apocalyptic motifs. Additionally, the profuse use of nature imagery hints at Galla Placidia's Visigothic connections. The relevance of these associations becomes apparent when one looks at the life of Galla Placidia.

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[1] Janet Charlotte Smith, "Form and Function of the Side Chambers of Fifth- and Sixth-century Churches in Ravenna," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 49, no. 2 (June 1990): 201.

GALLA PLACIDIA: BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Galla Placidia was the daughter of the Emperor Theodosius I and his second wife Galla, and was born around 388 or 389, probably in Constantinople.[2] Theodosius, a Spaniard and an Orthodox Christian, ruled the eastern Roman Empire. After the death of the western emperor, Gratian, Theodosius was able to reunite the two halves of the empire for a brief period. Upon the death of Theodosius in 395, the empire was again divided between his sons, Galla Placidia's half brothers. Arcadius ruled in the east (395-408) and Honorius ruled in the west (395-423). Galla Placidia went with Honorius and lived in the west. The western empire was continually troubled by invasions from various Germanic tribes. At first the western capital was located in Milan, but by 402 it had been moved to Ravenna, a more easily defensible city. In 410, Galla Placidia was in Rome when it was invaded by the Visigoths. She became their prisoner and traveled with them south to Campania. When weather did not permit them to cross over to Sicily, the Visigoths returned to the north, crossed the Alps and moved into southern France, then continued to Cadiz (ancient Gades) in southern Spain.

While they were in northern Spain, in 414, Galla Placidia married the Visigothic chieftain, Athaulf. She bore a son, Theodosius, who died in infancy in 415. Athaulf was assassinated later that same year, and Galla Placidia was

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[2] All biographical information is taken from Stewart Irvin Oost, *Galla Placidia Augusta: a Biographical Essay* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968).

handed over to the Roman army. She returned to Ravenna in 416, with an entourage of devoted Visigoths. In 417, she was married against her will to Constantius, the Roman general who had orchestrated her return. She gave birth to a daughter Honoria, in 418, and a son, Valentinian, in 419. After the death of Constantius in 421, Galla Placidia was accused of being in treasonous league with the Visigoths and she was banished by the western Emperor Honorius. By 423, she was living in Constantinople with her two small children, and, by some accounts, in a state of simple piety. While she was not a member of the imperial household at this time, she survived upon the income from properties left to her by her father.

Honorius died in 423, and his throne was quickly taken over by a usurper. Theodosius II, emperor of the east, decided it was best to place a member of the imperial house on the western throne and he chose Galla Placidia's son Valentinian. By 425, Galla Placidia and her family were ensconced in Ravenna, where she acted as regent for the six-year-old Valentinian. From 425 to 437, when her son turned 18 and assumed the throne, Galla Placidia was effectively the ruler of the western Roman Empire. After 438, and until her death in 450, Galla Placidia took on the role of pious Christian laywoman. She had sponsored the church of San Giovanni Evangelista during her period on the throne, and after 438, continued to sponsor decorative programs and objects for churches in Ravenna and Rome.

APOCALYPTIC MOTIFS

The life of Galla Placidia after her return to Italy from Visigothic captivity in Spain sheds some light on the links amongst Galla Placidia, the Book of Revelation, and the Visigoths. When Galla Placidia was sent into exile, she first went to Rome but eventually went to Constantinople, taking her two children. At some point, either on her way into exile at Constantinople, or on her way back to triumph at Ravenna, she was caught in a storm at sea. Galla Placidia prayed to St. John the Evangelist and made a vow that she would build a church to him if he saved her and her children.[3]

Galla Placidia eventually did build San Giovanni Evangelista in Ravenna, but more than that, included Apocalyptic motifs in her other foundations. Modern scholars now recognize that St. John the Evangelist, one of the 12 apostles of Jesus Christ and the writer of the fourth Gospel, was not the same person as John, an itinerant Christian prophet active in Asia Minor c. 95, who wrote the Book of Revelation.[4] In the fifth century, however, the two Johns were confused and fused. This confusion also helped legitimize the Book of Revelation, which

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[3] Oost, *Galla Placidia Augusta*, 174-177. Why she chose this particular saint is unknown, although Rizzardi states St. John the Evangelist was "the protector of seafarers and of the imperial Theodosian family." See Clementina Rizzardi, "Il Mausoleo nel mundo culturale e artistico di Galla Placidia" (The Mausoleum in the cultural-artistic world of Galla Placidia), in Clementina Rizzardi, ed. *Il Mausoleo de Galla Placidia a Ravenna* (Modena: F.C. Panini, 1996), 112.

[4] Bernard McGinn, "Introduction: John's Apocalypse and the Apocalyptic Mentality," in *The Apocalypse in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), 13.

up until the fourth century was the subject of debate amongst church leaders, as the events prophesized had not come to pass.[5] Fourth-century Church Fathers Tyconius and Augustine advocated an ahistorical and non-literal reading of the events of the Apocalypse, a position that held the day. This validation promoted the use of Apocalyptic motifs in art especially after 350. In keeping with the ahistorical reading of the Book, the Book's representation in art was not narrative or comprehensive, but instead a series of motifs.[6] This holds true of the way in which Apocalyptic themes are presented in Galla Placidia's foundations.

Galla Placidia was patron of at least six chapels and churches: three in Ravenna, two in Rome, and one in Rimini.[7] Of these, the mosaic programs of only three can be determined.[8] The church of Santa Croce in Ravenna, to which the Mausoleum had originally been attached, had the Four Living Creatures on

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[5] Paula Fredriksen, "Tyconius and Augustine on the Apocalypse," in *The Apocalypse in the Middle Ages*, 21.

[6] Peter K. Klein, "Introduction: The Apocalypse in Medieval Art," 161-162, and Dale Kinney, "The Apocalypse in Early Christian Monumental Decoration," 200, both in *The Apocalypse in the Middle Ages*. It is also interesting to note at this point that these motifs showed up in most media during the fourth century except manuscript illumination, where they can only be documented from the sixth century. Compare with the discussion regarding the three-dimensional polychrome meander as a framing device for canon tables in manuscripts and its appearance in the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia in this paper. Perhaps mosaics or the way mosaicists worked influenced manuscript painting in the fifth and sixth centuries.

[7] The foundations are: in Ravenna, San Giovanni Evangelista, Santa Croce, and its chapel San Zacharia; in Rome, Santa Croce in Gerusalemme and San Paolo fuori-le-mura; and Santo Stefano in Rimini. See John Bryan Ward-Perkins, *From Classical Antiquity to the Middle Ages: Urban Public Building in Northern and Central Italy, AD 300-850* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 237 (Roman foundations) and 241 (Ravenna foundations). For Rimini, see Oost, *Galla Placidia Augusta*, 277, and Rizzardi, "Il Mausoleo nel mundo culturale e artistico di Galla Placidia," 119. Rizzardi suggests additional foundations.

[8] The mosaics of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme, Rome do not survive; the church of St. Stephen, Rimini, and the San Zacharia chapel, Ravenna, have been completely destroyed.

its main entrance portal.[9] The triumphal arch of San Paolo fuori-le-mura in Rome still displays the Four Living Creatures and the 24 Elders, although these are 19th-century reconstructions of the original mosaics.[10] Of all the secure Placidian foundations, the most well-documented mosaic program belongs to San Giovanni Evangelista in Ravenna, the church dedicated to Galla Placidia's patron saint. The mosaics are known from a description made by G. Rossi in 1568 before they were destroyed.[11] Here Galla Placidia chose to make a pro-Orthodox statement on the triumphal arch by displaying portrait medallions of the emperors of the Theodosian dynasty excluding Valens and Valentinian II who were known for their pro-Arian policies.[12] A scene of St. John saving Galla Placidia from her calamity at sea showed how that saint helped promote the continuation of the Theodosian dynasty in the Ravennate wing of the imperial family. Mixed in with these overtly political images were images from the Book of Revelation: the Four Living Creatures, 7 candlesticks (Rev. 1:12, 20), and Christ handing an open book to John possibly representing the scroll with the seven seals that gave John the gift of prophesy (Rev. 5:1 and 10:8-11).

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[9] Rizzardi, "Il Mausoleo nel mundo culturale e artistico di Galla Placidia," 121, and Kinney, "The Apocalypse in Early Christian Monumental Decoration," 214.

[10] The original mosaics burned down in 1823. See Kinney, "The Apocalypse in Early Christian Monumental Decoration," 212, and Oost, *Galla Placidia Augusta*, 269.

[11] See Caecilia Davis-Weyer, *Early Medieval Art, 300-1150: Sources and Documents*, Medieval Academy of America Reprints for Teaching 17 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press in association with the Medieval Academy of America, 1986), 17, who cites the original G. Rossi, *Historiarum Ravennatum libri decem* (Venice: Paolo Manuzio, 1572), 85-86. See also a drawing of a reconstruction in Clementina Rizzardi, "Mosaici parietali esistenti e scomparsi di eta placidiana a Ravenna: iconografie imperiali e apocalittiche," *Corso di cultura sull'arte ravennate e bizantina* 40 (1993): 389.

[12] Rizzardi, "Il Mausoleo nel mundo culturale e artistico di Galla Placidia," 120-121. Galla Placidia's grandmother, Justina, was also pro-Arian; see Oost, *Galla Placidia Augusta*, 46-48.

The Mausoleum of Galla Placidia contains abundant Apocalyptic images such as the Four Living Creatures, the Alpha and Omega, the seven stars surrounding the cross in the dome, and the four prophets. However, as has been shown, the expression of the Apocalypse in the Mausoleum extends to elements that are usually perceived as merely ornamental. It is this groundbreaking use of Apocalyptic motifs that lends credence to the theory of Galla Placidia as patron.

While Apocalyptic imagery was used in the monumental art of the Roman Empire during the fourth century, Dale Kinney sees a "clear break just after [the year] 400" in the types of Apocalyptic motifs used. Before 400, the Alpha and Omega symbols and the lamb were used. After 400, this repertoire increased to include the 24 Elders, the Four Living Creatures, and other elements found in the Book of Revelation. Why this is so "deserves investigation," but Kinney supplies two theories. One theory is that there was a reaction to the fall of Rome in 410. The other theory suggests the "patronage of the Empress Galla Placidia, whose personal devotion to the author of the Apocalypse was probably a cause of some innovative imagery in Ravenna and ... Rome,"[13] especially in Ravenna where "Apocalyptic motifs ... appear in unparalleled combinations."[14]

Indeed, the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia contains three highly innovative Apocalyptic motifs: the meander describing the gates of the New Jerusalem, the emerald rainbow, and the tent of the tabernacle. Why were these motifs not

[13] Kinney, "The Apocalypse in Early Christian Monumental Decoration," 210-211.
[14] *Ibid.*, 207.

duplicated in any other Placidian or other imperial foundation? Probably this is merely an accident of time. Rarely do entire ancient mosaic programs survive intact. Often just an apse mosaic, the obvious narrative elements, or the Christian emblems will survive and the seemingly purely ornamental mosaics will be replaced by more "modern" decoration. The fact that so much of their mosaic programs remain is what makes the monuments of Ravenna so special. The emerald rainbow motif can be seen in the Orthodox Baptistery of Ravenna, c. 450s,[15] an arena where it could still carry Apocalyptic meaning as the baptized were among the saved at the end of time. Ornamental motifs were usually not documented by historians and writers either: Agnellus only documented surviving inscriptions on buildings; G. Rossi, a man of the Renaissance period, would have overlooked what was perceived to be decoration in favor of figural and representational imagery.

VISIGOTHIC MOTIFS

Besides Apocalyptic motifs, one feature that dominates the ornamental mosaics of the Mausoleum is the use of nature motifs. While in general typical of Late Antique mosaic decoration, the use of plants and flowers, especially curling vines and the marguerite, also dominated Visigothic funerary art found on

[15] Kurt Weitzmann, ed. *Age of Spirituality: Late Antique and Early Christian Art, Third to Seventh Century. Catalogue of the Exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, November 19, 1977, through February 12, 1978* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art; in association with Princeton University Press, 1979), 659-660. The building was erected under Bishop Ursus (d. 396) or slightly later, and interior decoration commissioned by Bishop Neon, c. 451-458 or later.

sarcophagi from southwestern France.[16] This observation is an interesting one since the area of southern France/northern Spain Galla Placidia was taken during her captivity was an area that remained artistically linked to northern Italy, specifically Ravenna.[17] While Christian emblems and figures are often present, the sides and tops of Visigothic sarcophagi are typically filled with sculpted vine, ivy, and acanthus scrolls.[18] Another feature of Visigothic funerary art was the absence of inscriptions, leading to an "anonymity of the dead."[19] Inscriptions are often found in Late Antique Roman art, especially mosaics, however, they are absent from the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia.

Could this affinity with an Arian Visigothic aesthetic have any importance in a monument so connected to Orthodoxy and the Roman Empire? When one begins to consider the possible function of the Mausoleum, the connection becomes more plausible.

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[16] John Bryan Ward-Perkins, "The Sculpture of Visigothic France," *Archaeologia* 87 (1938): 79-128.
[17] Charles Rufus Morey calls this the "Italo-Gallic school" of art, an area from the east coast of Spain "along the trade routes of which Ravenna was the eastern terminus." See Charles Rufus Morey, *Early Christian Art: An Outline of the Evolution of Style and Iconography in Sculpture and Painting, from Antiquity to the Eight Century* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1953), 128.
[18] Ward-Perkins, "The Sculpture of Visigothic France," especially 80-89, and H. S. Sivan, "Funerary Monuments and Funerary Rites in Late Antique Aquitaine," *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* 5, no. 3 (1986): 339, 343.
[19] Sivan, "Funerary Monuments and Funerary Rites in Late Antique Aquitaine," 348.

FUNCTION

As the Mausoleum was originally attached to the narthex of the sepulchral church of Santa Croce, the purpose of the Mausoleum must have been funerary in nature, yet its precise purpose is unknown. While both the narrative and ornamental mosaics support the theory of funerary function, it is the ornamental mosaics which provide evidence that the Mausoleum was meant specifically to be an imperial burial place, that is, an imperial mausoleum.

The ornamental mosaics provide visual links to floral decorations for tombs (the garland of the north soffit), canopies over funerary banquets held in commemoration of the dead (the north and south vaults), the grape vines in cemetery gardens (the east and west vaults and the facings of all four barrel vaults), and baldachins over martyrs' graves (the loose ribbon of the upper lunettes). These visual links imply the final resting place of someone, and given the plethora of imperial associations, this person must have been a member of the imperial family.[20] Gillian Mackie believes the original occupant of the Mausoleum to have been the son of Galla Placidia and the Visigothic chieftain Athaulf, Theodosius, who died in infancy in 415.[21]

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[20] The building was not a martyr's memoria because the remains of both of the probable occupants based on the south lunette, St. Lawrence and St. Vincent, were buried elsewhere, St. Lawrence in Rome and St. Vincent in Valencia. For Lawrence see *The Book of Saints; a Dictionary of Servants of God Canonized by the Catholic Church: Extracted from the Roman & Other Martyrologies. Compiled by the Benedictine Monks of St. Augustine's Abbey, Ramsgate* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1947), 362. For Vincent see Francis Mershman "St. Vincent," *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 15 (1912). Online ed. (2003). http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15434b.htm (10 Sept. 2003).

[21] Gillian Vallance Mackie, *Early Christian Chapels in the West: Decoration, Function, and Patronage* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), 172-193, and Mackie, "The Mausoleum of Galla Placidia: a Possible Occupant," *Byzantion* 65 (1995): 396-404.

Using history and legend, Mackie traces the body of the infant Theodosius from Barcelona, where he was born and died, to the Theodosian imperial mausoleum in Rome where he was purportedly finally interred along with the body of Galla Placidia in 450. Presumably the small silver casket containing the body of Theodosius traveled with Galla Placidia on her return to Ravenna in 416. As Santa Croce was most likely built during this first period of Galla Placidia's residence in Ravenna before her exile, it is entirely possible that the Mausoleum was built at this time as well.[22] However, if the Mausoleum was built specifically for Theodosius, the son of an Arian Visigoth, then given the climate in which Galla Placidia was forced into exile, it would be surprising that the Mausoleum would have remained unspoiled. It makes more sense that Galla Placidia built the Mausoleum after her triumphant return to Ravenna in 425 as regent to the future emperor Valentinian. There is archaeological evidence that the Mausoleum was an addition to Santa Croce and not an original feature; it could have been added at this point. That Galla Placidia still felt strongly for her son upon her return to Ravenna is evident by the inclusion of the portrait bust of Theodosius amongst the mosaic medallions of San Giovanni Evangelista.

Do the mosaics, including the ornamental mosaics, make a case for Theodosius as the occupant of the Mausoleum? Mackie suggests the presence

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[22] For the date of Santa Croce see Clementina Rizzardi, "L'architettura del Mausoleo tra Oriente e Occidente: cosmopolitismo e autonomia" (The Mausoleum's Architecture Between East and West: Cosmopolitanism and Autonomy), in Rizzardi, ed. *Il Mausoleo*, 130.

of a Spanish theme in the mosaics.[23] Galla Placidia's father, Theodosius, for whom she had strong affection, was originally from Spain.[24] Galla Placidia's first husband, Athaulf, was a Visigoth whose tribe settled in Spain, and this was probably a love, rather than a political, match.[25] Their son, Theodosius, named after his esteemed grandfather, was born and died in Spain. Athaulf also died in Spain. Mackie claims that the lunette mosaic of what is usually considered St. Lawrence is instead St. Vincent of Saragossa, a Spanish saint.[26] Her theory is convincing, but St. Lawrence was also of Spanish origin and his deeds were lauded by the fourth-century Spanish poet Aurelius Clemens Prudentius who also praised Vincent.[27] Using either interpretation there would be a link to a Spanish saint in the figural mosaics of the Mausoleum.

The ornamental mosaics also hint at a Visigothic, and hence Spanish, connection with the prevalence of nature motifs.[28] The east and west vaults and lunettes in particular resemble the sculpted decoration of fifth- and sixth-century Visigothic sarcophagi. Several such marble sarcophagi survive which show the

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[23] Gillian Vallance Mackie, "New Light on the So-called Saint Lawrence Panel at the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia, Ravenna," *Gesta* 29, no.1 (1990): 54-55.
[24] Oost, *Galla Placidia Augusta*, 41, 43.
[25] *Ibid.*, 127.
[26] Mackie, "New Light on the So-called Saint Lawrence Panel at the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia, Ravenna," generally, and Mackie, *Early Christian Chapels in the West: Decoration, Function, and Patronage*, 189-192.
[27] Lawrence was born in Huesca, Aragon, Spain. See *The Book of Saints; A Dictionary of Servants of God*, 362. For Prudentius, see Paul Lejay "Aurelius Clemens Prudentius," *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 12 (1908) . Online ed. (2003). http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12517c.htm (10 Sept. 2003).
[28] The Visigoths ruled parts of what is now France and Spain from 420 to 507. See Ward-Perkins, "The Sculpture of Visigothic France," 89-90.

same combination of vine scrolls with Christological monogram as is seen in the east and west vaults of the Mausoleum.[29]

It is the ornamental mosaics that reveal the true purpose of the little fifth-century cruciform building in Ravenna. In addition to all the Roman funerary elements, and the eastern imperial themes seen in the ornamental mosaics of the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia, there is a link to Visigothic funerary art, reminding the viewer that the occupant of the Mausoleum was all of the above: Roman, imperial, and Visigothic.

CONCLUSION

Without a doubt, the colorful interior of the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia, resplendent in jewel-like mosaics, is beautiful. The iconography of the figural and emblematic mosaics, still comprehensible after over 1500 years, is complex, mingling funerary, salvational, Apocalyptic, and imperial themes. Yet, when considered in context of the time and place, the ornamental mosaics reveal themselves to be as complex in meaning as the figural and emblematic mosaics.

Twentieth-century Modernism stripped ornament away from art, and in the process stripped away the meaning of ornament from modern scholars' understanding of art. To the modern viewer the ornamental mosaics of the Mausoleum have the function of merely adding beauty to the Christian

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[29] See Sivan, "Funerary Monuments and Funerary Rites in Late Antique Aquitaine," fig. 12 at 349 for a sixth-century example now housed in the Louvre, and Ward-Perkins, "The Sculpture of Visigothic France," plate 31, nos. 6 and 8.

monument. However, "it is possible for an ornament to be *the* subject of the design. In fact, any artifact ... is to the viewer ... only ornamented surfaces until such time as other meanings are provided for them."[30] This thesis has provided meanings for a Late Antique monument within the context of Late Antique art and philosophy. Now it can be understood that the ornamental mosaics of the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia mirrored the themes supplied by the figural and emblematic mosaics, and were as complex in their symbolism. In the spirit of the art of the era, each ornamental motif conveyed several themes, such as the emerald rainbows of the east and west soffits simultaneously representing the Apocalyptic rainbow as well as showing off the latest fashion in art and design, the rainbow style.

Late Antique viewers understood that in their environment ornament was a visual language meant to communicate a message. Additionally, Late Antique viewers comprehended that ornament was a "vehicle of transformation ... used ... to transform the appearance of the simple wall of a room, to make it into something other than what it [was]."[31] To the Late Antique viewer the Mausoleum was not just a small cruciform building made of brick and mortar and decorated with mosaics, it was a tented space with an opening to Heaven, a cemetery garden to replenish the funerary feast, an imperial domain. The

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[30] Grabar, Oleg, *The Mediation of Ornament*, A.W. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts, 1989; Bollingen Series, 35:38 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 41 (his emphasis).
[31] John Mitchell, "A Word on Ornament and Its Uses," in *Le rôle de l'ornement dans la peinture murale du Moyen Age: Actes du colloque international tenu à Saint-Lizier du 1er au 4 juin 1995* (Poitiers: Université de Poitiers, Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Centre d'Études

modern viewer must now be willing to read the language of Late Antique ornament, letting it answer some of the questions of the past.

Superieures de Civilisation Médiévale, 1997), 214. See also Grabar, *Mediation of Ornament*, 41: Ornament "can transform the very purpose of its carrier."

APPENDIX 1

Historical Background to the Art of Mosaics

PAVEMENT MOSAICS

The art of mosaic first appeared in the Aegean around the eighth century B.C.E.[1] The earliest pavement mosaics were pebble mosaics from Asia Minor which later found their way into Greece around the fifth to fourth centuries B.C.E. Many of these early pebble mosaic pavements were made wholly with black-and-white stones and utilized geometric patterns and motifs. Complex figural polychrome pebble mosaics seem to have been reserved for the important rooms of a building.[2]

Most scholars see the pebble pavement tradition as a precursor to the tradition of tessellated mosaics, where hand-cut cubes of marble or stone called *tesserae* were used instead of naturally formed pebbles. Tessellated mosaic pavements, or *opus tessellatum*, were a Hellenistic invention, and early on were largely polychrome. While the locus of invention is unknown, tessellated

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[1] Doro Levi believes the art of pavement mosaic to be of entirely Aegean origin rather than having roots in the Near East. See Levi, *Antioch Mosaic Pavements* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1947), 3-5. Most scholars follow Levi's lead. In earlier scholarship, mosaics were linked to Chaldean (Mesopotamia) architectural decoration of around 3000 B.C.E. The Chaldeans used a technique where columns were decorated with colored terracotta cones pushed into the column surface point first, leaving the flat colored base to create a patterned covering. However, pavement mosaics, which appeared centuries later and miles away, seem to have their own history rather than being a development from this architectural ornamentation.

[2] Gordium in Phrygia is one of the earliest Asia Minor sites, Olynthus and Pella are two of the earliest Greek sites. Ph. Petsas, "Mosaics from Pella," in *Colloques Internationaux du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique: La Mosaïque Gréco-Romaine, Paris, 29 Août-3 Septembre 1963* (Paris: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1965), 50-51.

pavements were widespread throughout the Hellenized Mediterranean, appearing in Alexandria in Egypt, Morgantina in Sicily, and Pergamon in Asia Minor around the third century B.C.E. A much finer technique, *opus vermiculatum*, was developed around the second century B.C.E. The tesserae of *opus vermiculatum* are a fraction of the size of those used in *opus tessellatum*, so much finer gradations of color can be articulated, and, therefore, much more illusionistic scenes can be created. With the amount of labor involved in *opus vermiculatum* – one picture could involve tens of thousands of tesserae – these scenes were usually small, and were used as centerpieces for rooms, the outer framing being geometric and other ornamentation created in *opus tessellatum*. The small, illusionistic, polychrome centerpieces are called *emblemata* (singular, *emblema*) and it is believed most were derived from or were direct copies of Hellenistic paintings. This polychrome Hellenistic mosaic tradition spread to *Magna Graecia* – southern Italy and Sicily – around the second century B.C.E., and became part of Roman imperial taste after that empire's first century B.C.E. conquest of the Hellenized world.

It has been said that mosaic is "an art which, while Greek by origin, is specifically Roman in its developments."[3] Mosaics in Republican Rome were disparaged as part of the influx of *luxuria Asiae*, or oriental luxuries, which

[3] Catherine Balmelle, et al., *Le Décor géométrique de la mosaïque romaine: répertoire graphique et descriptif des compositions linéaires et isotropes* (Paris: Picard, 1985), 4.

appeared in Rome after its second century B.C.E. conquest of Greece.[4] By the time of the Empire in the first century B.C.E. and first century C.E., however, mosaic floors had become a fashion in private houses. The demand was such that new ornamental patterns were developed.[5]

By the second century C.E., a building boom amongst the middle class in the Roman port town of Ostia necessitated the development of cheaper forms of tessellated mosaic flooring.[6] Hence the uniquely Roman black-and-white mosaic tradition, a less labor-intensive mosaic technique, became popular. While the black-and-white scheme had been used for ornamental borders surrounding emblemata and in pebble mosaics, this new mosaic tradition marked the first time the black-and-white color scheme was used for tessellated figural mosaics. This new tradition is distinguished not only by its use of black designs against a white ground, but by the overall use of *opus tessellatum*, the two-dimensionality of the design and hence a tendency toward abstraction, the use of repeated all-over patterning for non-figural works, and multiple orientation of the elements of figural designs rather than a single orientation which is found with emblemata mosaics.[7]

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[4] See the excerpts from Livy and Pliny and subsequent discussion in J. J. Pollitt, *The Art of Rome, c. 753 B.C. - A.D. 337: Sources and Documents* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 33-34.
[5] Asher Ovadiah, *Geometric and Floral Patterns in Ancient Mosaics: a Study of Their Origin in the Mosaics from the Classical Period to the Age of Augustus* (Rome: "L-Erma" di Bretschneider, 1980), 193, states that "thirteen new patterns make their appearance during this period."
[6] H.P.L. L'Orange and P.J. Nordhagen, *Mosaics* (London: Methuen & Co., 1966), 38-39.
[7] For an in depth look at the Roman black-and-white mosaic tradition, see John R. Clarke, *Roman Black-and-White Figural Mosaics* (New York: New York University Press, 1979).

The black-and-white tradition is found in Rome's provinces, especially in western Europe, but also in Africa and some isolated provinces in the east. However, this diffusion of the black-and-white tradition was slow and never completely replaced the Hellenistic polychrome tradition in the provinces, rather elements of the black-and-white mosaics were eventually merged into polychrome mosaics. In the western and northern provinces of Britain, Gaul, Spain, Germany, the Danube frontier, and the Alps, the "romanization" of indigenous cultures began around the first century C.E., and so did the diffusion of Roman mosaic traditions. It is in these western provinces that we find a strong stylistic link to the Roman mosaic tradition, rather than to eastern or Hellenistic traditions. Although polychrome figural mosaics were preferred, the black-and-white technique with a continuous white ground, and therefore multiple viewpoints, was incorporated into the polychrome figural tradition. The compartmentalization of figures and design elements by a grid of geometric frames, probably derived from black-and-white geometric grids, also became a standard method of presenting figural pavements.[8]

In Roman Africa – the provinces of Africa Proconsularis, Numidia, and Mauretania – the technique of tessellation did not arrive until the late first century C.E., and lasted until the early fifth century when the Vandals established a kingdom in Carthage. The first examples of mosaics in Roman Africa were black-and-white geometric patterns; however, the black-and-white scheme was

[8] Roger Ling, *Ancient Mosaics* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1998), 18, 61-63

quickly rejected in favor of polychromy. The white ground and all-over composition of the black-and-white tradition were used for polychrome figural mosaics. The zenith of African mosaics was in the second and third centuries with the Floral Style which relied on a geometric framework but is marked by elaborate curvilinear vegetative motifs.[9]

In the eastern Roman provinces it appears that only Syria continued the Hellenistic traditions with full force. Up until the end of the fourth century, which marked a stylistic turning point in the east, there was a heavy reliance on polychromatic illusionism in mosaics, from prominent display of figured emblemata, to frames of naturalistic vegetation against dark grounds. The Italian presence could be felt as one moved west: Pergamon and other parts of Asia Minor show mixed use of Hellenistic and Italian traditions; Greece, however, is heavily dominated by Italian styles. Economic troubles in Greece after the first century B.C.E. did not allow for independent development of mosaics out of its own Hellenistic heritage. Elsewhere, such as Palestine, the remains of mosaics prior to the third and fourth centuries is so scant that stylistic development cannot be determined. Later examples from Palestine, after the fourth century, show a strong Jewish influence toward aniconic motifs.

One of the problems in studying stylistic development and influences in the art of mosaics is the lack of a consistent timeline that can be reconstructed in some areas. Another problem is the fault of looters and even archaeologists who

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[9] Katherine M. D. Dunbabin, *Mosaics of the Greek and Roman World* (Cambridge: Cambridge

have ripped emblemata from their original contexts without proper documentation. Additionally, until Doro Levi's seminal work, borders and entire floors of purely geometric and ornamental design were neglected by scholars. Levi wrote that these ornamental borders proved to be "a mighty help in the task of sketching a history of" mosaics, yet were neglected until the mid-20th century.[10] Another problem in the scholarship of mosaics is the lack of good photographs, especially color photographs. The neglect of the study of border motifs has meant that only emblemata tend to end up as illustrations in books. Added to this is the fact that much of the excavation and documentation work was done before color photography was standard in the field.

The study of wall and vault mosaics also suffers from gaps in the timeline of their development. The main obstruction to the study of this art form is that very few intact or substantial examples survive from prior to the fifth century C.E. New strides in research in this field during the last quarter of the 20th century have put wall and vault mosaics in perspective against their sibling art form, pavement mosaics.[11]

University Press, 1999), 103-104.

[10] Levi, *Antioch Mosaic Pavements*, 6.

[11] See Dunbabin, *Mosaics of the Greek and Roman World*, chapter 14. Dunbabin's principal sources for the history of wall and vault mosaics are Henri Lavagne, *Operosa Antra. Recherches sur la grotte à Rome de Sylla à Hadrien*, Bibliothèque des Ecoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome, fasc. 272 (Rome: Ecole française de Rome, 1988), and Frank Sear, *Roman Wall and Vault Mosaics*, Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archaeologischen Instituts, Roemische Abteilung, Ergänzungsheft 23 (Heidelberg: F. H. Kerle, 1977).

WALL AND VAULT MOSAICS

The art of wall and vault mosaics is a Roman invention. Katherine Dunbabin and others see this art as having distinct origins from pavement mosaics, but that the two eventually overlapped and had substantial influence upon each other. This distinction can be traced back to the original Latin terms: *Museiarius* or *musivarius* meant a wall and vault mosaicist; *tessallarius* meant a pavement mosaicist.[12]

Wall and vault mosaics possibly were derived from the practice of encrusting objects with precious and semi-precious stones in Ptolemaic Egypt. The Roman practice seems to have begun during the first century B.C.E. with the decoration of caves and artificial grottoes on the grounds of villas of wealthy Romans. Caves were associated with nymphs and the Muses (hence the derivation of the Latin word for mosaicist) and were common attributes of the landscape architecture of villas. These areas were shady and usually associated with water, often in the form of pools or fountains, and were used for retreats or entertaining and banqueting.

The decoration of these grottoes imitated the rustic appearance of nature and involved the application of pumice and other volcanic rocks, shells and other marine items, plus Egyptian blue (beads or pellets formed from an artificial

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[12] Dunbabin, *Mosaics of the Greek and Roman World*, 236. However, Manuela Farneti, *Glossario tecnico-storico del mosaico: con una breva storia del mosaico* (Technical-Historical Glossary of Mosaic Art: with an Historical Survey of Mosaic Art) (Ravenna: A. Longo Editore, 1993), 191, states "The term *musearius* and *museiarius* are not found in classical Latin." The idea that the

pigment), and marble chips. Sometimes the mortar would be colored. Eventually tesserae of marble, stone, and Egyptian blue were incorporated. By the end of the first century B.C.E., glass was being used. At first this was in the form of waste or broken glass, with glass tesserae being introduced during the second quarter of the first century C.E. The use of uniform tesserae as opposed to rustic natural objects meant that the decoration of walls and vaults was no longer attempting to imitate nature and did not have to be confined to structures in the landscape of a villa. By the era of Seneca and Pliny (c. first century C.E.) glass mosaic was a fashionable means of decorating the walls and vaults of baths.[13]

It was popular amongst the urban middle and upper classes of Pompeii and Herculaneum to have mosaic ornament covering fountains and columns in the gardens and courtyards of their houses. Nero's first palace in Rome also had wall mosaics. These first century mosaics imitated Roman Third and Fourth Style painting rather than pavement mosaics, although emblemata were used.[14] Ceiling designs such as coffering were also imitated in mosaic.

The art of wall and vault mosaics had spread to the provinces by the second century C.E. In all parts of the empire, the most frequent use was in

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term is meant specifically for wall and vault mosaicists is from Sear; L'Orange and Levi believe the term to indicate the artists in charge of figural or other special designs.

[13] Seneca (c. 4 B.C.E.-65 C.E.) mentions "walls hidden by glass," see Edgar Waterman Anthony, *A History of Mosaics* (New York: Hacker, 1968), 40. Dunbabin, *Mosaics of the Greek and Roman World*, 238, mentions Pliny's description of a bath with glass mosaic c. 60-70 C.E.

[14] Dunbabin, *Mosaics of the Greek and Roman World*, 240. Nero's first palace was the *Domus Transitoria*, c. 25-64 C.E.

baths, but mosaics were also used to decorate tombs, pagan shrines and Mithraea,[15] fountains and pools,[16] plus some theaters and circuses. Peculiar to North African Christian art was the decoration of sarcophagi and tombstones with mosaics.[17] By the fourth century, the walls and vaults of imperial palaces were being decorated with mosaics. Also by this century the interiors as well as exteriors of Christian buildings were being covered with mosaics. Most remaining wall and vault mosaics are these Christian examples that have been preserved throughout the centuries due to continuous use of the buildings.

WALL/VAULT AND PAVEMENT MOSAICS: COMPARISON

The difference in origins and functions of wall/vault mosaics and pavement mosaics also meant differences in technique. The use of mosaic decoration on structures associated with water such as pools and fountains, encouraged the use of blue as a ground color, rather than white which was typical of floor mosaics. Blue backgrounds continued to be used on walls and vaults regardless of function: Christian mosaics in Italy retained the use of the blue ground in the interiors of churches for centuries.

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[15] L'Orange and Nordhagen, *Mosaics*, 45, discusses wall and vault mosaics of the Mithraeum at Ostia and the Lupercal chapel in Rome, both c. third century.
[16] Especially in North Africa. See Dunbabin, *Mosaics of the Greek and Roman World*, 246-247.
[17] Charles Rufus Morey, *Early Christian Art: An Outline of the Evolution of Style and Iconography in Sculpture and Painting, from Antiquity to the Eight Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1953), 99.

Pavement mosaics, because of their function as flooring, had to be smooth. After being laid, floor mosaics were ground and polished.[18] However, the beginnings of wall and vault mosaics as textured surfaces of pumice and shells indicated that a smooth wall surface was not an aesthetic in that domain. Additionally, the association with water invited the use of reflective and textured surfaces to promote more fully the play of light and water, so glass tesserae were set at angles to better catch and reflect the light. This practice continued into the Early Christian era where wall and vault tesserae were set at various angles to reflect and disperse the light of candles and oil lamps. The rustic look of grottoes was also retained in the Early Christian practice of letting the mortar show between the tesserae.

The materials used in pavement mosaics had to be durable. To this end stone and marble were used, although glass was used sparingly to obtain colors that were not readily available in natural stone, such as bright blue, red, and green.[19] The Hellenistic illusionistic aesthetic behind early pavement mosaics encouraged the use of natural color schemes.[20] The mosaics of walls and vaults did not have the requirement for durability, so early on fragile objects such as shells were used. The change to the use of glass tesserae increased the color range of wall and vault mosaics. The range of colors available for Early Christian

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[18] This was a development of tessellated pavements. Pebble mosaics were not smoothed and polished. See L'Orange and Nordhagen, *Mosaics*, 35.
[19] *Ibid.*, 35.
[20] According to Pliny, painters in Classical Greece utilized a "noble and restrained palette" of four colors: black, white, red, and yellow. See Philip Ball, *Bright Earth: Art and the Invention of Color* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2001), 15.

mosaics was about 200.[21] Brilliant colors were used instead of the natural tones of pavement emblemata. By the end of the second century or beginning of the third century C.E., gold and silver tesserae (metal leaf sandwiched between two sheets of clear glass) were also being used.[22]

The tesserae of *opus vermiculatum* could be as small as two millimeters square or smaller. In general the tesserae of pavement mosaics ranged in size from two millimeters to two centimeters square. First century C.E. wall and vault mosaics were about half a centimeter square, with later Christian mosaics being larger, roughly one to two centimeters.[23]

When it comes to compositions, the relationship between pavement and vault mosaics is complex. While the two forms developed independently, at some point they began to use each other as sources for compositional schemes. Pavement mosaics as early as the first century B.C.E. were using patterns which imitated coffered ceilings. Although coffered ceilings were not necessarily covered with mosaics, there are examples of imitation coffering done in mosaic on flat ceilings. These designs were then transposed to the floor. This compositional scheme, which usually included a decoration or figure in the center

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[21] Constantinople was the center of glass production in this era, see Farneti, *Glossario*, 67, and P.J. Nordhagen, "The Penetration of Byzantine Mosaic Technique into Italy in the Sixth Century A.D.," in *Studies in Byzantine and Early Medieval Painting* (London: Pindar Press, 1990), 48. However, in the fifth-century church Santa Maria Maggiore, Rome, only 48 different tones of colors were used, see Anthony, *A History of Mosaics*, 41-42.
[22] L'Orange and Nordhagen, *Mosaics*, 60.
[23] Farneti, *Glossario*, 71, 87; Dunbabin, *Mosaics of the Greek and Roman World*, 244-245.

of each "coffer," was used especially in Italy and the west.[24] The earliest preserved floor mosaic which imitates a vault (as opposed to a flat or coffered ceiling) is from the Roman province of Byzacena in North Africa, and is dated to the mid-second century C.E. Here the composition resembles a cross vault: Candelabra shoot up from the corners of the room, meeting in the center to form a grand "X." A flanking section of the floor resembles a barrel vault. The patterns and motifs used are also typical of vaults. Dunbabin suspects that this particular mosaic was created on the floor by experienced vault mosaicists.[25] This composition was also discovered in second-century mosaics in Rome and in early fourth-century mosaics in Antioch, Syria.[26]

The earliest preserved vault mosaics that use pavement compositional schemes are those of Santa Costanza in Rome. The mosaics in question, in the barrel vaults of the ambulatory, are dated to 337-351 C.E., and they follow closely features established by the Roman black-and-white tradition: the use of a white ground, a free figural space with multidirectional orientation (good for multiple viewing angles from below), and compartmentalization of figures and design elements by a grid of curvilinear geometric frames. What is interesting to note about this last feature is that the grid of linking circular and curvilinear frames

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[24] Examples include Villa of the Volusii Saturnini at Lucus Feroniae north of Rome, in polychrome dated 60-50 B.C.E., see Dunbabin, *Mosaics of the Greek and Roman World*, 55. See also examples dated to the first century B.C.E. from Terano and from Piacenza in Karl Lehmann, "The Dome of Heaven," *Art Bulletin* 27, no. 1 (March 1945), 5.
[25] Dunbabin, *Mosaics of the Greek and Roman World*, 104-105. The site is Acholla in modern Tunisia, in the frigidarium of the so-called Baths of Trajan.
[26] Charles Rufus Morey, *The Mosaics of Antioch* (London: Longmans Green, 1938), 37-38.

was used for stucco ceiling decoration in Pompeii. At some point the floor decoration that is imitating the decoration of a ceiling, finds its way back onto the ceiling, albeit changed from the original.[27]

CHRISTIAN AND LATE ANTIQUE MOSAICS

The use of mosaics in early Christian contexts adds another element to the floor/vault relationship. Very early on, Christian motifs such as the Good Shepherd were placed in mosaic flooring.[28] By the late fourth century, Christian figures had been transferred to the walls and vaults, and motifs used on the floors were of a more symbolic nature, such as vine scrolls, or were purely geometric.[29] Perhaps it was believed sacrilegious to put figures of holy persons on the ground. For whatever reason, the new placement of the figures on the walls and vaults began the art of Christian narrative mosaics.

Christian wall and vault mosaics borrowed from both wall/vault traditions and from pavement traditions. Early Christian mosaics are known for their tendency away from illusionism and toward abstraction. This is partly due to the new standard of larger tesserae for both pavements and walls, and also to a

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[27] See Levi, *Antioch Mosaic Pavements*, 459, for Pompeiian example, and 398, where he discusses ceiling tiles and their reflection in reticulated patterns found in floor mosaics. Gillian Vallance Mackie, "The Early Medieval Chapel: Decoration, Form, and Function. A Study of Chapels in Italy and Istria in the Period between 313 and 741 AD (Ravenna, Milan, Rome)" (Ph.D. diss., University Of Victoria (Canada), 1991), 49, discusses imitation coffering done in both paint and mosaic in the Via Latina catacomb, Rome.

[28] See L'Orange and Nordhagen, *Mosaics*, 42, for an example of a church in Aquileia, c. 320, which has a Good Shepherd on the floor.

[29] Henry Maguire, *Earth and Ocean: The Terrestrial World in Early Byzantine Art* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1987), 5-6.

factor established by wall and vault mosaics, that of distance. Images on upper walls and in apses at the ends of basilicas needed to be readable to those standing below. The use of brilliant colors also helped achieve this goal of readability, as did new combinations of contrasting colors to achieve effects of modeling, such as red and orange with flesh tones.[30]

Compositional practices in Christian mosaics seem to mirror those of pavements, although this time with the east influencing style in the west. In the fourth and fifth centuries, figural panels were used in a way similar to emblemata. This can be seen in the apse of Santa Pudenziana (c. 400) and in the nave of Santa Maria Maggiore (c. 432-440), both in Rome, and in the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia especially in the lunette of the Good Shepherd (fig. 3). These churches show figures in settings with ground lines, where blue is used for the background often in direct imitation of the sky. In the east, around 400, backgrounds of gold tesserae began to be used. These backgrounds were typically solid and did not indicate a setting for the figures. This type of gold-ground mosaic did not reach Italy until the late fifth or early sixth century, and can be seen there in some of the mosaics of San Vitale, Ravenna. Italian churches continued both gold-ground and blue-ground traditions, sometimes in the same building.[31]

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[30] L'Orange and Nordhagen, *Mosaics*, 48, 63.
[31] *Ibid.*, 52, 61-62. See also Nordhagen, "The Mosaics in the Cappella di S. Aquilino in Milan. Evidence of Restoration," in *Studies in Byzantine and Early Medieval Painting*, 29.

Pavement mosaics of the Late Antique era, drawing on the features of the black-and-white tradition, became increasingly abstract and geometric. The use of larger tesserae added to the abstract nature of late mosaics.[32] The background achieved a new prominence in the overall design as textural effects were developed: White tesserae used as background material were set in semi-circular patterns.[33]

The most important development of Late Antique pavements is the emergence of the repeat pattern, i.e., all-over patterning of regularized and repeated motifs. It is unclear how this particular scheme first came to be, but there are several precedents. First is the use of a grid of linked geometric frames to enclose motifs, a device which can be viewed as the repetition of compartments.[34] This type of composition became popular in the western Roman provinces and is the same compositional scheme used in the vault of Santa Costanza discussed above. Another precedent is the use of simple reticulation which may or may not contain motifs within the square spaces created by the criss-crossing lines. Although early examples have been found in Rome, this pattern was prevalent in the eastern provinces.[35]

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[32] See generally Marion Elizabeth Blake, "Mosaics of the Late Empire in Rome and Vicinity," *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome* 17 (1940): 81-130.
[33] L'Orange and Nordhagen, *Mosaics*, 42.
[34] James Lionel Trilling, *The Medallion Style: a Study in the Origins of Byzantine Taste* (New York: Garland, 1985), 29, 37, who calls this particular design scheme the Medallion Style and links it to textiles.
[35] Levi, *Antioch Mosaic Pavements*, 375, states that examples dating to second half of the first century have been found in Rome; Blake, "Mosaics of the Late Empire," 86, provides an example from the third century that was excavated at Sette Camini, Rome.

The repeat pattern is the hallmark of Late Antique eastern mosaic pavements and the finest examples come from Antioch-on-the-Orontes, the capital of the Roman province of Syria during the fourth and fifth centuries.[36] Antioch was considered one of the most important cities after Rome and Constantinople in late antiquity.[37] It was also a fairly wealthy city whose inhabitants could spend money on luxuries such as mosaics. Antioch is very important archaeologically because its mosaics, which date from c. 110 to 540, when the town, already weakened by an earthquake, was sacked by the Persians, show an unbroken lineage of styles from Imperial Roman times to the Late Antique period.[38] While the emblemata tradition with its depiction of classical stories persisted in this center of Hellenistic culture, the repeat pattern in various forms eventually was favored.[39]

The repeat pattern in mosaics, also called carpet pattern or *semis* in French, took various forms. It could be made up of figures – animal or human – or plant motifs or geometric shapes. The distinguishing element was that each element sat in its own space equidistant from its neighbor, and these elements were scattered across a blank field (usually white), but, unlike the grid scheme

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[36] The archaeological Antioch is now located in Turkey, near the modern city of Antakya.
[37] A fourth-century map of the empire emphasizes these three cities. The population of Antioch in the fourth-fifth centuries was c. 800,000 (Morey, *The Mosaics of Antioch*, 14-15), and it was the seat of the commander-in-chief of the troops of the eastern prefecture of the Roman Empire (Levi, *Antioch Mosaic Pavements*, 1).
[38] Christine Kondoleon, "Mosaics of Antioch," in Christine Kondoleon, *Antioch: The Lost Ancient City* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 63.
[39] Kondoleon, "Mosaics of Antioch," in Kondoleon, *Antioch*, 64-69, states that Antioch was a center of a Late Antique revival of Hellenistic Greek culture. The use of Greek for inscriptions in mosaics reminds the art historian of the connection to this culture. Ammianus Marcellinus, in

developed from the black-and-white tradition, the repeat occurred without partitions. The repeat was capable of infinite extension.[40] The most famous example of this style is the Phoenix mosaic, c. 500, now in the Louvre.

The Phoenix mosaic is important for the history of the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia in that it shows the use of repeated floral motifs. In the fifth century and into the sixth, floral motifs dominated Antiochene repeat pattern mosaic pavements and reticulated pavements. This floral style spread throughout the Near East from Syria to Palestine; its use in the Mausoleum indicates this style spread even further.[41] Motifs used included the oleander bud, and the four-petalled flower seen in the north and south vaults of the Mausoleum (fig. 13). This latter motif can be seen in the fifth-century Green Carpet mosaic now in the Dumbarton Oaks collection.[42] The fact that a pattern seen often in pavements of the fifth century has been transported to the vaults of the Mausoleum may reflect an innovation in design.

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describing Antioch c. 362, called it the "fair crown of the Orient" (*Rerum gestarum libri qui supersunt*, Loeb Classical Library (1950-1952), 2: 251).

[40] Levi, *Antioch Mosaic Pavements*, 11, note 53; Ernst Kitzinger, *Byzantine Art in the Making: Main Lines of Stylistic Development in Mediterranean Art, 3rd-7th Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980), 50-52; Charles Rufus Morey, *Early Christian Art: An Outline of the Evolution of Style and Iconography in Sculpture and Painting, from Antiquity to the Eight Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1953), 34.

[41] Levi, *Antioch Mosaic Pavements*, 444-446; Kitzinger, *Byzantine Art in the Making*, 89; Raffaella Farioli Campanati, "Decorazioni di origine tessile nel repertorio del mosaico pavimentale protobizantino del Vicino Oriente e le corrispondenze decorative parietali di Ravenna, Salonicco, Costantinopoli e Qusayr 'Amra," *Corso di cultura sull'arte ravennate e bizantina* 39 (1992): 281; Blake, "Mosaics of the Late Empire," 101 and plate 12, figure 2, shows a mosaic from the Antiquarium Communale, Room VII, Rome, dated to the third to fifth centuries, which includes red and white heart shaped buds on a field of green and is the only pavement mosaic of its kind to survive in Italy.

[42] For the Green Carpet mosaic see Dunbabin, *Mosaics of the Greek and Roman World*, plate 30.

The geometric grid, another compositional scheme that can be extended indefinitely, was frequently used in Antioch with motifs from the rainbow style. Rainbow motifs were used in conjunction with geometric grids as space filler. The use of rainbow motifs as filler meant this type of pavement could be used for the vast floors of Christian churches which, by the fifth century at least, demanded the use of non-figural motifs. Repeat patterns were used less frequently in the pavements of churches.

Antioch mosaics are also marked by the use of Sassanian motifs. These include animal busts often affronted and/or with the Persian ribbon, the *pativ*, around their necks. This is not too surprising as Antioch fell to the Persians several times and Antiochene artists were taken to the palaces of Persian kings.[43] There was definitely artistic contact and exchange between the two cultures. The use of Sassanian motifs in Antiochene mosaics coincided with the mature phase of Sassanian art in the fifth century, a century which also saw some periods of peace between the Roman and Persian empires.[44]

Because Antioch lies in the east, there has been speculation that the mosaics seen there may represent the style that would have been found in Constantinople. The Antiochene style is distinctly different from that of the western Empire, especially in its extensive use of repeated floral patterns and the

[43] Sapor I sacked Antioch in 253 and 260; the Persians finally destroyed the city in 540. See Dunbabin, *Mosaics of the Greek and Roman World*, 174.
[44] Anna Gonosová, "Exotic Taste: the Lure of Sasanian Persia," in Kondoleon, *Antioch*, 130.

rainbow style.[45] Certain motifs seen in the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia match those found at Antioch: the floral repeat of the north and south vaults, the rainbow style of the east and west soffits, the *pativ*-like ribbons seen on the upper lunettes. If Antioch mosaics reflect Constantinopolitan mosaics then some of those of the Mausoleum would also reflect Constantinopolitan mosaics.[46]

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[45] Wladimiro Dorigo, *Late Roman Painting: A Study of Pictorial Records, 30 B.C.-A.D. 500* (New York: Praeger, 1971), 267, footnote 13, considers some Antioch pavements to be "vulgarized and poor copies" of Constantinopolitan mosaics. Dissenting voices include Morey, *The Mosaics of Antioch*, 47-48, who sees Antioch as the source for all eastern style mosaics and not Constantinople.

[46] Although there is dissent from André Grabar, *Byzantine Painting: Historical and Critical Study* (Geneva: Skira, 1953), 54, who links Ravenna chiefly to Italian Christian art traditions.

APPENDIX 2

Textiles of the Late Antique Era

The weaving and sewing of textiles is an art form that has been around since at least the Neolithic era.[1] The decoration of textiles by various means such as embroidery and dyes has been around since the beginnings of the art, and the weaving of patterned textiles has been around since at least the Geometric Period of Greece,[2] c. eighth century B.C.E. From the beginning of the art, weaving had been the work of women, and this did not change in the Late Antique period. Galla Placidia herself received the traditional education of a Roman girl and learned various household tasks including weaving and embroidery.[3]

Textiles are fragile; they can tear, fade, become threadbare and ragged, and unless they are preserved in favorable conditions, they can disintegrate after a few centuries. This is in contrast to mosaics which can survive for thousands

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[1] Up until the Neolithic period it was only possible to weave small bands; changes in loom technology at that time enabled the weaving of large textiles. See Elizabeth Wayland Barber, *Women's Work: the First 20,000 Years: Women, Cloth, and Society in Early Times* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1994), 78.

[2] Diane Lee Carroll, *Looms and Textiles of the Copts: First Millennium Egyptian Textiles in the Carl Austin Rietz Collection of the California Academy of Sciences* (San Francisco: California Academy of Sciences, 1988), 29, 46.

[3] See Anna Muthesius, *Byzantine Silk Weaving: AD 400 to AD 1200* (Vienna: Fassbaender, 1997), 23-24, who quotes St. Theodoret of Cyrrhus' discussion of fifth-century weaving practices in Syria where women were the weavers and embroiderers. Charles Delvoye disputes this notion and states that men worked in the large imperial textile factories; however, he provides no source for this information; see Delvoye, "Les tissus byzantins," *Corsi di cultura sull'arte ravennate e bizantina* 16 (1969): 119. For Galla Placidia, see Stewart Irvin Oost, *Galla Placidia Augusta: a Biographical Essay* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), 64. Oost's source is Claudianus, *Carmina Minora* 47-48.

of years under the worst of conditions. Despite their fragility, there are as many as 100,000 fragments of preserved textiles from the Late Antique period.[4] Many of the Late Antique fragments were found associated with burials in Egypt and hence they are often referred to as "Coptic."[5] Burial practices in Egypt changed in the Late Antique period and it is because of this that so many textile fragments are preserved today. In the fourth century, mummification was abandoned in favor of dressing the corpse in clothing, then wrapping the entire body with large textiles such as curtains or bed coverings, and placing the body directly into the ground with a pillow under its head.[6]

Many of the same problems that affect the study of mosaics, affect the study of textiles: improper excavation including poor recording of sites and context; looting of burials; and, as in the case of mosaics where emblemata are often separated from the whole pavement, decorative and figural elements were often cut from larger pieces of fabric.[7] Early attempts at dating textiles are dubious. Nineteenth and early-twentieth century catalogs of textiles housed in

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[4] Anna Gonosová, "Textiles," in *Beyond the Pharaohs: Egypt and the Copts in the 2nd to the 7th centuries AD* (Providence: Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design, 1989), 65.
[5] The term Coptic is derived from *Aiguptios* or *Aegyptios*, the Greek geographical term for Egypt, and is most correctly applied to the Christian art of Egypt (and later Somalia) after the fifth century, when the Coptic Church broke away from Orthodox Christianity. It has wrongly become a generic term applied to all art found in Egypt dated between the first century C.E. to the Islamic conquest; see Donald N. Wilber, "Pagan and Christian Egypt: an Exhibition (review)," *Ars Islamica* 9 (1942): 151, and James Lionel Trilling, "The Roman Heritage: Textiles from Egypt and the Eastern Mediterranean 300-600 A.D.," *Textile Museum Journal* 21 (1982): 11-17, for discussions of this term.
[6] Carroll, *Copts*, 61.
[7] Many of these problematic events did not necessarily take place in the 19th and 20th centuries with the rise of the practice of archaeology; burials have been looted and large pieces of cloth have been cut up for centuries.

museums show fragments arranged in such a way as to suggest stylistic degeneration, and the fragments were dated accordingly. Because most of these fragments were stripped from their contexts without proper analysis, their dating is not secure. Some properly excavated sites, such as Dura Europos and Palmyra, can at least offer a *terminus ante quem* for dating textiles found there. New scholarly methods such as proper excavation, cross-media stylistic analysis, and studies of textile weaving technology have strengthened attempts to date textiles.[8] Still, the problems with early investigations combined with the paucity of textile remains for some eras result in the fact that textile scholarship has not been able to show a complete stylistic development and continuity from the historical beginnings of that art. What can be determined to a certain extent are mini-histories of textiles for a particular era, such as the Late Antique period, or a geographic location, for example, if an archaeological site reveals textile remains.[9]

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[8] For criticism of dating see John Beckwith, "Coptic Textiles," *Ciba Review* 12, no. 133 (August 1959): 3-5, and Rudolf Berliner, "A Coptic Tapestry of Byzantine Style," *Textile Museum Journal* 1, no. 1 (1962): 3-14. Dura Europos fell to the Persians in 256 C.E., and textiles were found in Palmyran tombs dating to 83-273 C.E. This paper will use dates supplied by sources as indicated in footnotes.

[9] Barber disputes this, and offers a feminist perspective claiming that because textiles and weaving are traditionally women's work they have suffered from scholarly neglect. What is needed, she claims, is more research and such histories will be revealed. See Barber, *Women's Work*, 286-300. Current textile scholars such as Anna Muthesius and Mary Margaret Fulghum agree with Barber's conclusion albeit with less radical overtones.

ECONOMIC AND TECHNICAL ASPECTS

Evidence for the types of fabrics and weaves produced, and the locations of manufacture during the Late Antique period comes from archaeological and textual sources. According to these sources, textiles used by Late Antique Romans were either manufactured within the borders of the Roman Empire, or were imported into the empire from foreign manufacturers. The Prices and Wages Edict of the Emperor Diocletian, dated 301 C.E., includes 486 entries that mention textiles, and identifies 43 textile manufacturing sites located throughout the known world at that time.[10] The main centers of textile production within the borders of the Roman Empire included Egypt (the cities of Antinoopolis, Alexandria, Faiyum, and Crocodilopolis) and Syria (Tyre and Sidon).[11] Some textile products were produced in the western end of the empire, probably for local consumption.[12] Although under the Romans weaving became industrialized, Italy itself did not have large scale textile manufacturing. Instead there were a few small-scale producers on northern Italian estates, some textiles were produced in the home, and many textiles were imported.[13] Outside of the

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[10] Carroll, *Copts*, 6-7, 51. The Edict listed every commodity and service that would likely be for sale in any part of the Roman Empire and was intended to stabilize the economy. No complete copy survives.
[11] See Carroll, *Copts*, 10, and Wolfgang Fritz Volbach, *Early Decorative Textiles* (London: Hamlyn Publishing Group, 1969), 31, for Faiyum and Crocodilopolis. For Syria see Muthesius, *Byzantine Silk Weaving*, 66, who cites Procopius' *Secret History* which described the ruin of the silk industries in Tyre and Sidon by the Emperor Justinian in 550, and Volbach, *Early Decorative Textiles*, 17. Annemarie Stauffer, *Textiles of Late Antiquity* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1995), 9, also mentions Herakleia, Anatolia, as a place of manufacture.
[12] Carroll, *Copts*, 10 mentions England, Gaul, and Spain. These would be non-silk products.
[13] For textile production in Italy see Carroll, *Copts*, 28, 51.

empire, textiles were produced in China (especially silk), Persia, and India (especially cotton).[14]

Wool was a common fiber throughout the Roman Empire. Egypt was known especially for its linen, but also had silk and wool-weaving industries. Silk was a special case. References in the Diocletian Edict indicate that silk fabrics were being woven within the boundaries of the Roman Empire by the fourth century.[15] However, sericulture, the growing and harvesting of silk from silk worms, was not introduced into the west until the sixth century, during the reign of Justinian.[16] Silk, as both raw silk threads and as woven cloth, reached the west via the Silk Route which stretched from China to Syria, through Bactria and Persia, and which had existed since the second century B.C.E. Lying at the western end of the route, Syria played a prominent role in the manufacture and trade of silk for the west. Palmyra engaged in the trade of silk with the Parthians

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[14] Indian textiles were found at Antinoopolis, and Egyptian textiles were found in India; see Ludmila Kybalová, *Coptic Textiles* (London: Paul Hamlyn, 1967), 38; Carroll, *Copts*, 10; and Volbach, *Early Decorative Textiles*, 31. Han Dynasty Chinese silk was found in Palmyra; see Volbach, *Early Decorative Textiles*, 16-17; Michael W. Meister, "The Pearl Roundel in Chinese Textile Design," *Ars Orientalis* 8 (1970): 255-267; Otto Maenchen-Helfen, "From China to Palmyra," *Art Bulletin* 25 (December 1943): 358-362; and R. Pfister, *Textiles de Palmyre découverts par le Service des antiquités du Haut-commissariat de la République française dans la necropole de Palmyre* (Paris: Editions d'Art et d'Histoire, 1934-1940). All of this activity indicates trade.

[15] Carroll, *Copts*, 29.

[16] Even after sericulture was introduced, weaving took place only in the eastern empire. Western European silk weaving centers were not established until after 1200. See Anna Muthesius, "Silken Diplomacy," in *Byzantine Diplomacy: Papers from the Twenty-fourth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Cambridge, March 1990* (Aldershot, Hampshire: VARIORUM Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 1992), 237.

until the town was sacked in 273 C.E. The towns of Tyre and Berytus had silk dyeing industries, and imported raw silk was woven at Tyre and Sidon.[17]

THE NATURE OF TEXTILES

Evidence for the motifs, patterns, and ornamentation of textiles comes from extant remains, contemporary textual descriptions, and the depiction of textiles in other media. When considered together, the evidence reveals the most desired style to be one of elaborate ornamentation, especially for the upper classes and imperial ranks.

Floral motifs were very common on Late Antique textiles. They were arranged in bands and as repeats, grouped in baskets, as well as randomly scattered across a field. Textual descriptions of clothing reveal garments to be colorful and "flowery," the latter probably referring to the type of ornament.[18] For example, Eusebius of Caesarea, writing in 336, stated that the Emperor Constantine's robes were of royal purple, embroidered with gold, and "finished with intricate blossoms."[19]

Ivory diptychs, used by officials as testimonials of their consular authority during the fourth to sixth centuries, are a rich source of depictions of textiles.

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[17] See footnote 11 above. A weaving plant in Tyre is mentioned by the fourth-century writer Ammianus Marcellinus; see Ammianus Marcellinus, *Rerum gestarum libri qui supersunt*, Loeb Classical Library (1950-1952), 1:79.
[18] Christopher Jones, "Processional Colors," in *The Art of Ancient Spectacle* (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art; dist. by Yale University Press, 1999), 253-255.
[19] Harold Allen Drake, *In Praise of Constantine: a Historical Study and New Translation of Eusebius' Tricennial Orations*, University of California Publications, Classical Studies, vol. 15

Several examples share a common pattern on the garments of the consuls: a marguerite- or chrysanthemum-like flower enclosed in a circle or square used as a repeat.[20] Evidence such as the imperial diptychs and textual accounts reveal that a preferred style amongst the imperial elite was this flowery style.

Besides floral motifs, geometric motifs of all kinds were used on Late Antique textiles. Typical shapes included chevrons, meanders, zig-zags, ladders, triangles, diamonds, rhombi, squares, steps, lozenges with serrated sides, and multi-colored strips composed of little cubes. Other typical motifs found on Late Antique textiles included: rows of hearts, the wavy ribbon with a flower or leaflet in each curve, and crested waves.

Human and animal figures were also featured on Late Antique textiles. The fourth-century writer, Ammianus Marcellinus, reveals that the colorful decoration on clothing could include animal forms.[21] Theodoret, a fifth-century writer from Antioch, observed that garments depicted "all kinds of animals, and trees, as well as figures of men, some hunting, and some in prayer."[22]

(Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 89-90. Drake's source is *De Laudibus Constantini* V.4, 6.

[20] See "Portraiture," in Kurt Weitzmann, ed., *Age of Spirituality: Late Antique and Early Christian Art, Third to Seventh Century. Catalogue of the Exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, November 19, 1977 through February 12, 1978* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1979), 46-48, for the following ivory diptychs: Consul Felix, Rome, 428 (catalog no. 45), Consul Basilius, Italy, 480 (catalog no. 47), and various diptychs from sixth century Constantinople. Ernst Kitzinger, *Byzantine Art in the Making: Main Lines of Stylistic Development in Mediterranean Art, 3rd-7th Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980), illustrates other diptychs: Lampadii, Italy, c. 400 (fig. 68); Consul Boethius, Italy, 487 (fig. 81). Consulships were granted on an annual basis; see Kitzinger, *Byzantine Art in the Making*, 35.

[21] *Rerum gestarum libri qui supersunt*, Loeb Classical Library (1950-1952), 1:41.

[22] Henry Maguire, "Garments Pleasing to God: the Significance of Domestic Textile Designs in the Early Byzantine Period," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 44 (1990): 219. Maguire's source is *De providentia oratio* 4 (*PG* 83.617D).

All of the aforementioned motifs could be arranged on the whole fabric in various ways. Sometimes motifs were scattered about a textile, or they were arranged in a narrative scene, for example a festive scene with putti, garlands, and flowers. Other textiles utilized motifs in regularized repeated patterns. These repeat patterns could involve simple motifs (e.g., florets or circles) or complex motifs (e.g., busts or animals), in small-scale or large-scale patterning. One Christian motif in the repertoire of repeat patterns was the cross.[23]

The repeat pattern became the hallmark of the eastern imperial, later called Byzantine, style. A stylistic divergence between the eastern and western Roman Empire, especially when it came to clothing, is revealed in the Late Antique textual sources. "Eastern" referred not only to the style coming out of the capital of the eastern Roman Empire, Constantinople, its environs, and eastern provinces such as Syria, but also the style coming from Persia, which seems to have very much influenced the eastern Roman Empire.[24] The eastern style was more colorful and more heavily ornamented than the styles of textiles that were manufactured in the west. The colorful effects for elaborate eastern style clothing were often achieved through embroidery. Fabrics were

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[23] Maguire, "Garments Pleasing to God," 218, and fig. 16 which shows a mosaic of a woman, Theodosia, who wears a garment with a repeat pattern of yellow crosses against a black ground.
[24] See *Rerum gestarum libri qui supersunt*, Loeb Classical Library (1950-1952), 2:397, Ammianus' description of Persian clothing as "gleaming with many shimmering colours." See also Joseph Francis Merriman, "Aristocratic and Imperial Patronage of the Decorative Arts in Rome and Constantinople, A.D. 337-395: The Role of Sculpture, Painting, Mosaics, and the Minor Arts in Fourth-Century Society" (Ph.D. diss., University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, 1975), 125-126.

embroidered with differently colored threads, including gold,[25] and some had precious stones sewn onto them. Thus, some embroidered fabrics were very heavy.[26] Contemporary descriptions reveal that most of these elaborately embroidered textiles were of silk.[27] This highly ornamented style was used lavishly among the upper classes of Late Antique society, especially in Constantinople, but also in Rome, where only high-ranking officials could wear silk robes embroidered with gold thread and jewels.[28] As elaborately decorated clothing indicated the wealth or high status of the wearer, depictions of people wearing such clothing, such as on consular diptychs, indicate the subject was a person of some import.

One type of textile is unique to the manufacturing centers in Late Antique Egypt and is most often termed "Coptic" in the art-historical literature.[29] This is a particular style where bands and designs of dark purple or black wool or linen were woven into undyed linen cloth.[30] The designs could be geometric, floral, or

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[25] Ammianus mentions a man in a gold embroidered tunic, see *Rerum gestarum libri qui supersunt*, Loeb Classical Library (1950-1952), 2:607. Embroidery using threads wrapped in gold foil was used as early as the Hellenistic era and continued into the Middle Ages. See Carroll, *Copts*, 46. For eighth- and ninth-century examples see Muthesius, *Byzantine Silk Weaving*, 125.
[26] See Claudianus' disapproval of such fabrics in Merriman, "Aristocratic and Imperial Patronage," 125-126; and Oost, *Galla Placidia Augusta*, 164, "the heavily embroidered and bejeweled robes of an emperor made it actually physically difficult to stride about."
[27] See Merriman, "Aristocratic and Imperial Patronage," throughout.
[28] In fourth century Rome specifically at the rank of consul and above. See Merriman, "Aristocratic and Imperial Patronage," 39.
[29] However, Trilling believes "Coptic" to be so problematic that he considers the more proper term to be "Late Roman monochrome tradition." See James Lionel Trilling, *The Medallion Style: A Study in the Origins of Byzantine Taste* (New York: Garland, 1985), 94, and Trilling, "The Roman Heritage," 29-30, where he also refers to this style as the "silhouette style." This paper will refer to this style as "Coptic" to maintain consistency with established scholarly sources.
[30] Carroll, *Copts*, 32. See below for a discussion of purple; the color used in Coptic textiles is not the imperial-grade purple.

figural. This style was used chiefly for clothing, not for household textiles. Whole garments and textile fragments have been discovered in Egypt, and there are depictions of people wearing garments of this type in other art forms across the Roman Empire.[31] This style was at its peak between the fourth and sixth centuries.

Late Antique textiles could be of several weave types. The fiber determined the type of weave, and the weave indicated the degree of complexity of patterns. The greatest number of surviving Late Antique textile fragments are of tapestry weave.[32] The tapestry loom is a simple device whereby a pattern or color can be changed at will by inserting single threads into the warp.[33] Surviving textiles show that the preferred fibers were wool and linen. Gold thread was sometimes used.[34] Tapestry weave was used for both clothing and large hangings. These fabrics were often multicolored with elaborate naturalistic figural compositions made up of diverse, rather than regularized or repeated, elements. Tapestry weave could lend itself to both polychrome shading effects and the monochromatic silhouette style of so-called Coptic textiles.

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[31] The most well-known example is the mosaic at Piazza Armerina depicting the patron of the villa. For illustration see Salvatore Ciurca, *Mosaics of Villa "Erculia" in Piazza Armerina, Morgantina* (Bologna: Nicolò Maltese, s.d. [c. 1990]), 54. Carroll, *Copts*, 8, makes a general reference to illuminated manuscripts and murals.
[32] Trilling, *The Medallion Style*, 43; Trilling, "The Roman Heritage," 14.
[33] The tapestry loom was developed in the third century B.C.E. See Stauffer, *Textiles*, 7, and 16 note 14. The warp on a tapestry loom goes up and down; the weft goes across.
[34] Trilling, *The Medallion Style*, 43. There is no evidence that silk and cotton were used in this type of weave during the Late Antique period. For the use of gold thread, see *Age of Spirituality (Catalogue)*, 146-147.

Drawloom technology, developed in China around the third century B.C.E., allowed for highly detailed uniform repeated patterns to be woven directly into the fabric. Because of the complex mechanics of a drawloom, the fineness of silk was well suited to this technology.[35] A western version of the drawloom was in use in Syria prior to the seventh century C.E., possibly as early as the fifth century.[36] Both silk and wool were used with the western version of the drawloom. While simple small-scale patterning could be achieved with this technique, drawloom fabrics are most noted for their use of the repeated medallion or roundel. Medallions could be set tangentially or within reticulation, in small scale up to monumental scale.[37] The use of repeated motifs and medallions is not unique to drawloom textiles – there are Late Antique examples of tapestry weave fabrics with these types of patterning – but the repeated motifs of drawloom fabrics are precisely regularized within one piece of fabric due to the loom's mechanized process.

In depictions of fabrics with repeated motifs or medallions, such fabrics are only shown on persons of great importance, either religious or secular. This may indicate that fabrics with repeated motifs and medallions were more often than not woven on drawlooms with silk, as silk was only available to persons who

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[35] Carroll, *Copts*, 29; Trilling, *The Medallion Style*, 43. A drawloom is a complex, mechanized device in which groups of warp threads are preprogrammed to be raised and lowered in order to create a regularized pattern.
[36] See Muthesius, *Byzantine Silk Weaving*, 24, who quotes the fifth century writer Theodoret who mentions a loom with a patterning device which may have been a drawloom.
[37] Sizes varied from each medallion being few inches wide to each being a yard wide. See Trilling, *The Medallion Style*, throughout, and Trilling, "The Roman Heritage," 96-97.

could afford such a luxury fabric.[38] The depiction of repeat motifs in non-textile media may have also conveyed a meaning of high status or luxury (fig. 14). On a late-fourth century ivory diptych of the Roman general Stilicho and his wife Serena the general's garment is decorated with a repeat pattern of little heads.[39] All of the female attendants of the Empress Theodora in the chancel mosaic in San Vitale are depicted wearing fabrics decorated with repeats of various types: reticulated medallions, flowers, birds, circles, and trees. These depictions were most likely meant to portray a certain type of fabric, a drawloom silk, which was only available to persons of high rank.[40]

Prior to the invention of the drawloom in the west, silk was woven using tabby weave (plain and compound), damask weave (tabby weave with extra pattern wefts), or twill damask weave. Linen and wool could be woven in these methods as well. All of these weave types allowed for small-scale ornamentation, including simple geometric repeats, to be woven into the cloth.[41] Looped weaving, utilizing supplementary weft loops, a technique also used in rug making, could achieve highly detailed designs and was in use in Egypt during the

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[38] For example, the diagonal arrangement of medallions on third-century Palmyrene tomb sculpture could represent, given its early date, Chinese drawloom silks. See Trilling, *The Medallion Style*, 45-46, and Mary Margaret Fulghum, "Under Wraps: Byzantine Textiles As Major And Minor Arts," *Studies in the Decorative Arts* 9, no. 1 (fall/winter 2001-2002): 16.
[39] The diptych is traditionally dated to c. 390-400, and is currently located at the Monza Cathedral Treasury, Italy. See illustration in Wolfgang Fritz Volbach, *Early Christian Art* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1961?), plate 63.
[40] For an illustration of the Theodora mosaic see Volbach, *Early Christian Art*, plate 167.
[41] Muthesius, *Byzantine Silk Weaving*, 2, 100, and 147 figure 15.

fourth century. This technique, also known as loop-pile, is less precise than tapestry weave but could achieve effects of subtle color gradations.

In addition to being directly woven into cloth, patterns and ornamentation could be applied via embroidery, appliqué, or with dye. As discussed earlier, much of the ornamentation for textiles used by the upper ranks of society was applied via embroidery. An example of typical Late Antique appliqué decoration is depicted in the curtains of the central door of the Palatium mosaic of the south nave of the Church of Sant'Apollinare Nuovo, c. 550 (fig. 14).

Ancient dyeing techniques for pattern-making included the resist-dye method and all-over dyeing in one color. Surviving Late Antique textiles reveal that dyes of various shades of red, yellow, orange, green, blue, black, and brown were used frequently to color fabrics. Purple, especially purple from shellfish off the coast of Tyre, was a special case. The purple dyes used for fabrics ranged in color from a blue or even a green hue, to a true red/blue purple.[42] In 424, under Theodosius II, laws were passed concerning the production and use of purple silk. The *De vestibus holoveris et auratis* section of the *Codex Theodosianus* was the first edict to create a legal imperial link between silk and the color purple. Private citizens were allowed to wear purple garments, but not purple garments made of silk; purple silk was reserved for imperial use. Private citizens could still procure silk, just not purple silk.[43] Given these restrictions, it becomes clear that

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[42] *Ibid.*, 146. See also Carroll, *Copts*, 32-33, who explains that cheaper purple dyes came from lichen and imperial dyes came from murex shellfish.
[43] Dominic Janes, *God and Gold in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 37. Philip Ball, *Bright Earth: Art and the Invention of Color* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and

the purple garments depicted in the mosaic of the Good Shepherd of the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia, and those of the Emperor Justinian, the Empress Theodora, and of Christ in San Vitale are meant to be purple silk.

SOCIAL ASPECTS

Household textiles could also indicate status, especially if they were of silk and were heavily ornamented.[44] Textiles were used in private homes during the Late Antique era in much the same way as textiles are used today, with some notable exceptions. Practical textiles included bed sheets, blankets, napkins, and towels. Textiles intended for display included covers for dining couches, for beds, for cushions, for tables, and for floors. The Late Antique house, and indeed all interior spaces at this time, contained hangings (called *cortinae*[45] or sometimes *vela*) hung on walls as decoration, used as curtains, and hung at openings such as between columns and in doorways (fig. 14). Especially in wealthy and imperial households, these large pieces of fabric tended to be multicolored and often had large-scale ornamentation.[46] Hangings were produced and sold in sets.[47] It is interesting to note that the pattern in the

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Giroux, 2001), 200, states, "under Valentinian II, Theodosius I, and Arcadius, the manufacture of Tyrian purple outside the Imperial dyeworks was punishable by death."

[44] Maguire, "Garments Pleasing to God," 215. See also Ammianus' description of the emperor's bed covers in *Rerum gestarum libri qui supersunt*, Loeb Classical Library (1950-1952), 1:217.

[45] Doro Levi, *Antioch Mosaic Pavements* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1947), 186.

[46] Trilling, "The Roman Heritage," 29.

[47] Stauffer, *Textiles*, 10.

Mausoleum most often compared to textiles covers two vaults and can thus be regarded as imitating a set of textiles.

Large textile hangings were also used by the state as decorations for walls and between the columns of arcades at public functions.[48] Banners were used by the military, and also in imperial processions, where banners would be embroidered with gold and gems.[49] Textiles, especially silks, also had diplomatic value. The later Byzantine use of silks as diplomatic gifts has been well documented, but this practice began as early as the fourth century C.E.[50]

The Church, as an arm of the imperial state, also used lavish textiles. Fine embroidered textiles were used for altar cloths and as covers for ecclesiastical accoutrements such as chalices and patens.[51] Hangings were used on walls and in openings such as doorways, and for an imperial church such as Constantine's Hagia Sophia, these hangings could be entirely of gold.[52] In the areas of Pontus, Syria, and Egypt – areas surrounding historical Jewish

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[48] Carroll, *Copts*, 47. Fulghum, "Under Wraps," 14, gives a sixth century example.
[49] See Ammianus' description of the procession of Constantius Augustus into Rome in 357, *Rerum gestarum libri qui supersunt*, Loeb Classical Library (1950-1952), 1: 243. Eusebius, in his *Life of Constantine*, describes the emperor's standard (*labarum*), Janes, *God and Gold*, 53. For military banners see Gillian Vallance Mackie, "The Early Medieval Chapel: Decoration, Form, and Function. A Study of Chapels in Italy and Istria in the Period between 313 and 741 AD (Ravenna, Milan, Rome)" (Ph.D. diss., University Of Victoria (Canada), 1991), 118.
[50] For the later Byzantine era see Muthesius, "Silken Diplomacy," especially at 237; and Fulghum, "Under Wraps," generally. For the fourth century see Ammianus, *Rerum gestarum libri qui supersunt*, Loeb Classical Library (1950-1952), 2: 121) who describes an event c. 361, "Arsaces and Meribanes, kings of Armenia and of Hiberia, were bribed with splendidly adorned garments and gifts of many kinds...."
[51] Thomas F. Mathews, *The Early Churches of Constantinople: Architecture and Liturgy* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1971), 171. For Constantine's gift to the Hagia Sophia see Merriman, "Aristocratic and Imperial Patronage," 153.
[52] Mathews, *Architecture and Liturgy*, 11-13. In the later Byzantine Empire hangings were used more extensively in churches, e.g., to cover icons, and to separate spaces such as the upper galleries; see Muthesius, *Byzantine Silk Weaving*, 124.

population centers – hangings were used to conceal the sanctuary of churches (the chancel and apse) as well as the altar (hung from the *ciborium*, or altar canopy). This practice may have been derived from the Jewish practice of the concealment of the ark within the Holy of Holies inside the Temple of Jerusalem.[53]

Textiles could be objects of religious veneration in and of themselves. St. Ambrose of Milan described the fourth-century practice of creating "contact relics" whereby cloths and garments were placed on the bodies or relics of saints and martyrs in order to absorb the sanctity of the object. After such an act, the textile pieces were thought to carry the same power as the source, such as healing ability or other miraculous energy.[54]

Besides hangings, another use of textiles that was more common in the ancient and Late Antique worlds than in the modern era, was as canopies. Canopies were used in many different situations, both private and public. The types ranged from *vela*, or awnings made from sail cloth,[55] to *aulea suspensa* made from more delicate material. In the public sphere, practical application of canopies were as sunshades and rain guards over Roman theaters and temples,

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[53] For a discussion of practice in the fifth century era of St. John Chrysostom see Mathews, *Architecture and Liturgy*, 165-169. For Jewish practice, see Margaret Barker, "Beyond the Veil of the Temple: The High Priestly Origin of the Apocalypses," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 51, no. 1 (1998):1-21, http://www.marquette.edu/maqom/veil (19 Feb. 2003).

[54] Fulghum, "Under Wraps," 15. *Brandea* was the specific term for such cloths laid on martyr's bodies, see Mackie, "The Early Medieval Chapel," 60-61.

[55] *Velum* means the sail of a boat made from sailcloth; it also came to indicate awnings and curtains made from such cloth, and then such coverings made from any material.

or stretched between buildings.[56] This practical application could also have added value. Over the amphitheater of Rome, Nero used a purple awning embroidered with an image of himself driving a sun-chariot, a propagandistic tool to equate the emperor with a god.[57] The early-sixth century rhetor Choricius described the splendor of the town of Gaza where the textiles that stretched between houses were of costly material[58] suggesting an aesthetic aspect of the practical sunshade. Canopies were also used as sunshades in the private sphere. A North African mosaic from the second-third centuries of the life of Achilles shows an outdoor patterned and fringed canopy shading Achilles, his mother, and his teacher.[59]

In the private sphere, a common use of the canopy during Roman Republican and Imperial times was as a dining or banquet awning. The use of textiles in this manner could be a mark of luxury or extravagance. Cleopatra hung a banquet tent with gold and purple textiles when she entertained Marc Anthony.[60] The first-century-B.C.E. satirist Horace described a ridiculously lavish

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[56] Otto Frei, *Schattenzelte, Sun and shade, Toldos, Vela*, Mitteilungen des Instituts für leichte Flächentragwerke (IL) Universität Stuttgart, 30 (Stuttgart: Institut für leichte Flächentragwerke, 1984), 14 and 19, states that this practice possibly began in the fishing communities of Campania, Italy in the sixth century B.C.E., and was commonplace by the early first century B.C.E.
[57] Karl Lehmann, "The Dome of Heaven," *Art Bulletin* 27, no. 1 (March 1945), 11, and Hans Peter L'Orange, *Studies on the Iconography of Cosmic Kingship in the Ancient World*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1953), 28. Sources are Dio Cassius *Hist.* LXIII 2, 5-6, and Pliny *Nat. Hist.* XIX 6.
[58] Dmitrii Vlasevich Ainalov, *The Hellenistic Origins of Byzantine Art* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1961), 186, whose source is Choricius' *Laudatio Marciani.*
[59] The scene takes place out of doors as indicated by the presence of rocks. The canopy also supports bunches of roses, also indicating an aesthetic function. See Roger Ling, *Ancient Mosaics* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1998), 86, fig. 60.
[60] Carroll, *Copts*, 48.

dinner party where things go wrong: "The canopy spread above came down in mighty ruin" upon the diners and platters.[61] Canopies were also used for entertainment at parties. Pompeiian frescoes of the first century C.E. show how canopies could hold party favors such as fruit, flowers, and small cakes, and when the ropes with which they were suspended were loosened, all the favors fell onto the guests beneath.[62]

As depicted in mosaics, dining canopies were used both indoors and outdoors. A third-century floor mosaic found in a house in Antioch depicts a drinking party with the red canopy attached to the columns in a room.[63] A first-century mosaic found near Rome depicts a young couple drinking under a white canopy which is tied to a tree.[64] A fourth-century mosaic shows a red canopy stretched between two trees over diners sitting on what appears to be a masonry couch. This depiction of a permanent outdoor dining area indicates that such activity was a regular event.[65] Sometimes the outdoor scene is of a less

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[61] Horace, *Satires, Epistles and Ars poetica*, Loeb Classical Library (1942), 238-245.
[62] John H. D'Arms, "Performing Culture: Roman Spectacle and the Banquets of the Powerful," in *The Art of Ancient Spectacle*, 306-307.
[63] The Symposium of Opora, Agros, & Oinos in the House of the Boat of Psyches, Room 8, Antioch, third-fourth century, now at the Baltimore Museum of Art. For an image see Christine Kondoleon, "Mosaics of Antioch," in Christine Kondoleon, *Antioch: The Lost Ancient City* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 73, fig. 7 (discussed at 71). Another indoor scene is the mosaic of the Drinking Contest, House of the Drinking Contest, Room 1, Antioch, late second-early third century, now at the Worcester Art Museum. See Doro Levi, *Antioch Mosaic Pavements* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1947), 156-157. Both were emblemata of dining room floors.
[64] Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien, "Mosaic from Centocelle (Roman, 1st century AD)," *Collections: Greek and Roman Antiquities: Roman: Reliefs and mosaics*, http://www.khm.at/homeE3.html (19 Feb. 2003).
[65] Kondoleon, *Antioch*, 184-186, mosaic from Italy (possibly Ostia) now at the Detroit Institute of Arts. Indeed, according to Richard Krautheimer, during the second century, permanent luxury pavilions designed for intimate gatherings became quite popular in Roman life. See Krautheimer, "Success and Failure in Late Antique Church Planning," in *Age of Spirituality: a Symposium*, 131-

permanent banquet, as can be seen at Piazza Armerina where a hunting party dines under a red canopy stretched between two trees in the mosaic of the Room of the Small Hunt.[66] Another hunting scene from the fourth century is depicted on a gilt silver plate where the diners recline under a canopy patterned with stripes and repeated circles. Above them is a Christological monogram, indicating that the patron was a Christian.[67]

In the imperial and ecclesiastical realms, the use of canopies was symbolic rather than practical. By the third century, perhaps earlier, a canopy became part of the trappings of the Roman imperial throne. Within the throne room the canopy marked the location of the throne chair, and hence the emperor. Originally this was a textile canopy, but by the sixth century, the canopy, also called a *baldachino*, had become a permanent architectural feature to mark the throne.[68] Because of its imperial associations, in art, the canopy became part of the visual language expressing authority in the Late Antique era into the Middle Ages. In the Dura-Europos Synagogue, dated to the mid-third century, a draped cloth canopy hangs over Pharaoh and his court in the painting of the Childhood

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136. Fifty-six outdoor dining rooms were found in Pompeii. See Wilhelmina F. Jashemski, *The Gardens of Pompeii : Herculaneum and the Villas Destroyed by Vesuvius* (New Rochelle, N.Y.: Caratzas Bros., 1979), especially 89-97.

[66] From the fourth century. See Ciurca, *Mosaics of Villa "Erculia" in Piazza Armerina*, 41-47.

[67] The Sevso Hunting Plate, provenance unknown, now in a private collection in England. See Jas Elsner, *Imperial Rome and Christian Triumph: The Art of the Roman Empire A.D. 100-450* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 90.

[68] L'Orange, *Studies on the Iconography of Cosmic Kingship*, 134-135, who believes the Romans took the idea of the imperial canopy from the Persians. Also originally a textile canopy under the Achaemenids, by the time of the Sassanians under Khusrau the Persian canopy had become a fixed dome.

of Moses.[69] Three centuries later in the Rossano Gospels, Judas can be seen kneeling before the High Priest of the Pharisees who sits under a baldachino.[70]

Related to this idea of the canopy becoming "a symbol of the honour or veneration due to the person or object which it sheltered"[71] is the development of canopies used to mark the tombs of martyrs within chapels and in the Roman catacombs. There is little visual and textual evidence to show these martyrs' canopies were originally of textiles, although some depictions appear that way.[72] The celebration of the Eucharist took place at these martyrs' tombs, and hence the altar canopy, or *ciborium*, developed out of the tomb canopy.[73] In the dome of the Orthodox Baptistery in Ravenna (c. 450-460) is a mosaic showing textiles hanging over each of the twelve apostles, possibly symbolizing the canopies stretched over martyrs tombs (fig. 15).[74]

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[69] See illustrations in Pierre du Bourguet, *Early Christian Painting*, trans. Simon Watson Taylor (New York: The Viking Press, 1965), 169, 170.
[70] Gospels. Cathedral Library. Rossano (Calabria). fol 8r, sixth-seventh century.
[71] John Bryan Ward-Perkins, "Memoria, Martyr's Tomb, and Martyr's Church," *Journal of Theological Studies* 17 (1966): 26.
[72] Volbach, *Early Decorative Textiles*, 78, gives a late example of a shrine in France with a "baldachin of precious cloth." See Weitzmann, ed. *Age of Spirituality (Catalogue)*, 581, catalog no. 520, "Ivory Pyxis with Women at the Tomb of Christ," from Syria-Palestine, sixth century, where the domes of the tomb baldachino look like pleated fabric.
[73] See Molly Teasdale Smith, "The Development of the Altar Canopy in Rome," *Rivista di archeologia cristiana* 50, nos. 1-4 (1974): 379-414, throughout. By the sixth century, altar canopies were often made of precious materials such as silver and gems.
[74] Similar decoration can be seen in San Giovanni in Fonte, Naples, fifth century. See Lehmann, "Dome," 12.

SHARED MOTIFS: THE THEORY OF PATTERN BOOKS

The ornamental mosaics of the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia clearly draw from both mosaic and textile traditions. This phenomenon was not restricted to the mosaics of the Mausoleum. Many mosaics, such as the repeat-patterned floor mosaics from fifth- and sixth-century Antioch, drew motifs from textiles as well as mosaics. A textile fragment found at Dura Europos, dated prior to 256 C.E., shows staggered rows of quatrefoil rosettes of petals shaded from red on the outside to pink and white against a green ground. This particular pattern matches a fifth-century mosaic floor found at Antioch, called the Green Carpet mosaic.[75] Even at Ravenna the use of textile motifs is not limited to the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia. A black and white border motif used in the mosaics of San Vitale was also used in Coptic-style textiles.[76]

Why would these two very different art forms share such a wealth of motifs and patterns? There are several theories which offer possible answers to this question.

One theory is that portable arts, such as textiles, influenced mosaics and other non-portable arts, such as sculpture. Surely this is true to some extent,

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[75] For the textile see R. Pfister and Louisa Bellinger, *The Excavations at Dura-Europos conducted by Yale University and the French Academy of Inscriptions and Letters. Final Report IV. Part II. The Textiles* (New Haven: Yale University Press; London: Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press, 1945), 39 (catalog no. 140 and frontispiece color plate). For the Green Carpet mosaic see Katherine M. D. Dunbabin, *Mosaics of the Greek and Roman World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), plate 30.

[76] For illustrations of such textiles see Diane Lee Carroll, *Looms and Textiles of the Copts: First Millennium Egyptian Textiles in the Carl Austin Rietz Collection of the California Academy of Sciences* (San Francisco: California Academy of Sciences, 1988), catalog nos. 17 and 28.

however, it does not account for certain trends which appear simultaneously or which developed initially in mosaics. The silhouette style, a native Italic tradition of black-and-white mosaics of the second century C.E., pre-figured Coptic-style monochrome textiles which appeared later, during the third century.[77] Trilling, in his discussion of the medallion style in Byzantine textiles, suggests that the medallion was a strong "formal impulse" for both textiles and mosaics and that this motif could have developed at the same time in both media.[78]

Epigraphical evidence supports the theory of the itinerant mosaicist who could have utilized motifs seen on textiles in travels across the Roman Empire. Several mosaics are signed by mosaicists who also signed their place of origin indicating that they were not native to the location where the mosaic was found.[79] This theory could explain why several of the motifs in the Mausoleum are similar to mosaic motifs seen at Antioch and in eastern textiles.

Another theory is that of the existence of pattern books shared by ateliers of the two craft traditions.[80] There is very little proof that pattern books existed

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[77] James Lionel Trilling, "The Roman Heritage: Textiles from Egypt and the Eastern Mediterranean 300-600 A.D.," *Textile Museum Journal* 21 (1982): 30, sees the monochromatic tradition in textiles as having "no parallel in drawing" but does not mention mosaics. For a discussion of the silhouette style in mosaics see John R. Clarke, *Roman Black-and-White Figural Mosaics* (New York: New York University Press, 1979).

[78] James Lionel Trilling, *The Medallion Style: A Study in the Origins of Byzantine Taste* (New York: Garland, 1985), 27.

[79] See, for example, Christine Kondoleon, "Mosaics of Antioch," in Christine Kondoleon, *Antioch: The Lost Ancient City* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 64-65, for a third-century C.E. mosaic in Crete signed by a mosaicist from Daphne, near Antioch; and Jocelyn M.C. Toynbee, *Some Notes on Artists in the Roman World*, Collection Latomus 6 (Brussels: Latomus, Revue d'Etudes Latines, 1951), 43-46, for examples of Greeks working in the western Roman Empire and possibly a North African mosaicist working in Britain.

[80] Pattern books, if they existed, could also have been used by other trades. For example, fol 2v of the Syrian Gospel (Paris. Bibliothèque National Syr. 33, c. sixth-seventh century) shows the same basket with flowers motif also seen on several textiles found in Egypt, see Dmitrii Vlasevich

prior to the 11th century. Drawings on papyrus and paper were found in Egyptian trash dumps pointing to at least the existence of preparatory drawings. One papyrus fragment is dated to the fourth to sixth centuries and shows several motifs in black, white, red, violet, blue, and yellow, including the quatrefoil rosette seen in the north and south vaults of the Mausoleum.[81] The climate of Egypt is particularly conducive to the preservation of papyrus, so it is unclear if it is an accident of history that such preparatory drawings or pattern books were preserved there, or if only Egyptian workshops, i.e., textile workshops as Egypt had no mosaic tradition, used such drawings.

The existence of pattern books during the Late Antique period and their use by mosaicists is controversial. Most scholars conclude that such books may have been used at least for certain elements. Many scholars simply assume the existence of pattern books while some attempt to prove their existence on stylistic grounds. Jocelyn Toynbee believed the existence of similar figural scenes and decorative motifs seen in mosaics across the Roman Empire and spanning the centuries as proof of the existence of pattern books.[82] Donald Wilber saw the existence of a regional style, called the "littoral style," that was

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Ainalov, *The Hellenistic Origins of Byzantine Art* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1961), 86-87. Wolfgang Fritz Volbach, *Early Decorative Textiles* (London: Hamlyn Publishing Group, 1969), 40, compares Ravenna ivories to the Sabina Shawl from Antinoopolis. See also Beat Brenk, "The Imperial Heritage of Early Christian Art," in *Age of Spirituality: a Symposium* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1980), 49, who discusses patternbooks used by manuscript illuminators.

[81] Now at Berlin Staatliche Museen Papyrussammlung, P. 13275, 9922-26, see R.W. Scheller, *A Survey of Medieval Model Books* (Haarlem: De Erven F. Bohn N.V., 1963), 46 and generally. See also Annemarie Stauffer, *Textiles of Late Antiquity* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1995), 12.

[82] Toynbee, *Some Notes on Artists in the Roman World*, 46-47.

confined to Egypt, Syria, and Palestine during the fourth to sixth centuries and believed this style was promoted by the use of pattern books.[83] Claudine Dauphin believed that the depiction of non-imaginary animals in mosaics in geographical regions where the animals were unknown points to the use of pattern books.[84] Doro Levi, while supporting the existence of pattern books to a limited extent, was also a critic of the theory and believed that many of the motifs found at Antioch, despite their having examples in other media, were developed independently by mosaicists.[85] Levi believed that pattern books were used especially by the lower level craftsmen in an atelier, the *tessellarii* or *tessellatores*, to create borders for emblemata. These pattern books accompanied the more skilled mosaicists when they traveled and they could then use local craftsmen to create the simpler forms.[86] However, Philippe Bruneau believes that geometrical patterning was part of the general training of mosaicists and that pattern books, if they existed at all, were most likely used by the more skilled mosaicists for the creation of figural scenes.[87]

Some scholars deny the existence of pattern books, instead proposing that mosaicists were trained via apprenticeship where they had to memorize

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[83] Donald N. Wilber, "Pagan and Christian Egypt: an Exhibition," *Ars Islamica* 9 (1942): 153-155.
[84] Claudine Dauphin, "Byzantine Pattern Books: a Re-examination of the Problem in Light of the 'Inhabited Scroll'," *Art History* 1, no. 4 (December 1978): 404, and generally.
[85] One of these motifs is the floret, see Doro Levi, *Antioch Mosaic Pavements* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1947), 453.
[86] *Ibid.*, 8-10.
[87] Philippe Bruneau, "Les mosaïstes antiques: avaient-ils des cahiers de modèles?" *Revue archéologique* (1984): 253.

patterns and standard figural scenes.[88] This would account for the transmission of motifs across time but not across media. Given the similarities of motifs down through the centuries in mosaics, and given the similarities between mosaics and textiles (and other media) during a particular time period, clearly designs were being shared in some manner. The theory of pattern books is a particular useful one to explain this phenomenon.

One area of this debate not thoroughly explored is the idea of the pattern book emanating from imperial workshops. It is known that some textile production, e.g., the dyeing of cloth using Tyrian purple, was strictly controlled by the government in the east. It is known that there was an imperial textile workshop housed within the walls of the palace in Constantinople, with weavers, dyers, gold embroiderers, and tailors.[89] It is also understood that large textile hangings used across the Empire in public buildings, churches, and the houses of the wealthy, could only have been produced in large, highly organized workshops.[90] Is it possible, then, that large workshops developed and disseminated pattern books of designs used by small imperial workshops, in order to set the fashion and stylistic demands of the day? If so, this practice could have resulted in pattern books finding their way into the hands of other

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[88] Kondoleon, "Mosaics of Antioch," 65. See also Scheller, *Medieval Model Books*, 2.
[89] Volbach, *Early Decorative Textiles*, 23; and Joseph Francis Merriman, "Aristocratic and Imperial Patronage of the Decorative Arts in Rome and Constantinople, A.D. 337-395: The Role of Sculpture, Painting, Mosaics, and the Minor Arts in Fourth-Century Society" (Ph.D. diss., University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, 1975), 124-125.
[90] Stauffer, *Textiles*, 10. Alexandria, Egypt, probably had such large organized workshops, see Anna Gonosová, "Textiles," in *Beyond the Pharaohs: Egypt and the Copts in the 2nd to the 7th centuries AD* (Providence: Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design, 1989), 65-66. Rudolf

non-textile artisans and workshops. Some motifs in the Mausoleum, such as the double running wave crest, are found predominantly in textiles and not in contemporary mosaics. This may indicate a direct imitation of a textile, or that the mosaicists used pattern books meant for textile arts, perhaps emanating from an imperial workshop.

Berliner states that some "estate workshops could qualify as factories." See Rudolf Berliner, "A Coptic Tapestry of Byzantine Style," *Textile Museum Journal* 1, no. 1 (1962): 12.

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Fig. 1. Mausoleum of Galla Placidia, general view of interior (south side). View seen upon entering the Mausoleum. Ornamental motifs pictured include emerald rainbows, three-dimensional polychrome meander, loose ribbon, and portions of meander borders of the east and west vaults.

Fig. 2. Mausoleum of Galla Placidia, general view of exterior (west side). *Left*: Behind the Mausoleum is the church of Santa Croce (structure with four pilasters and a tower).

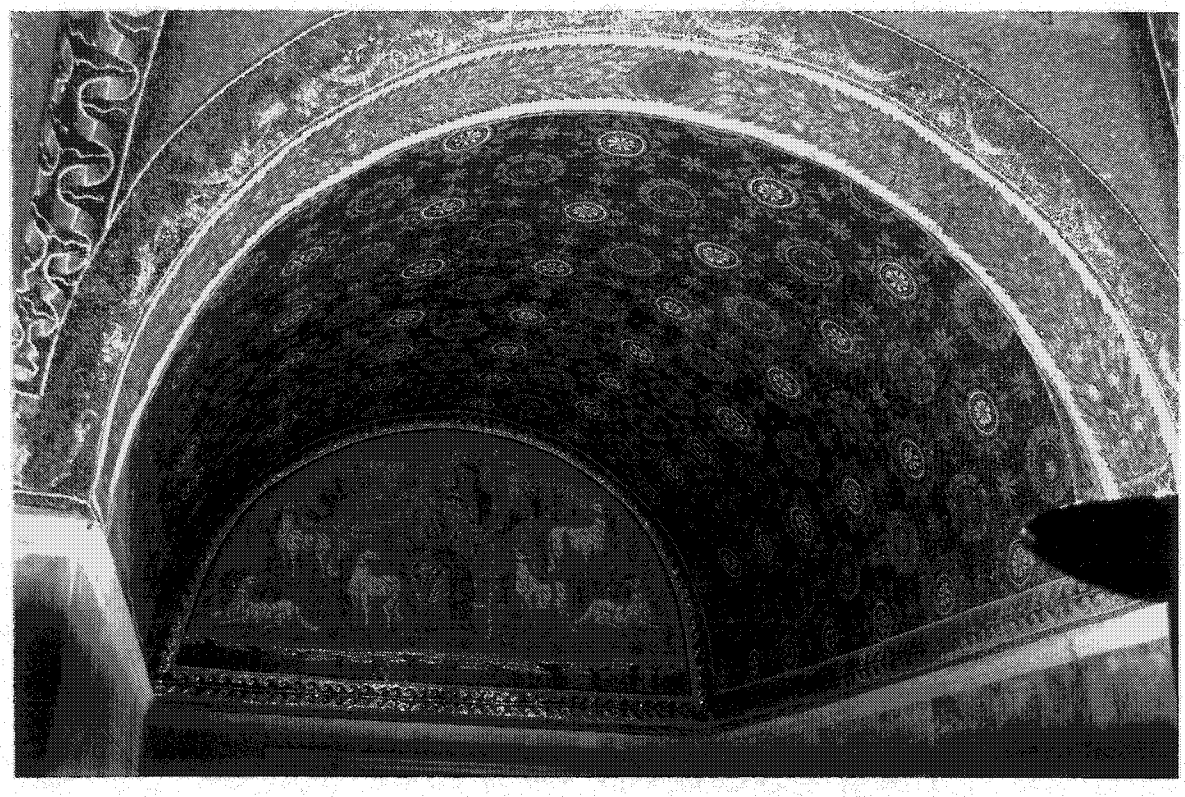

Fig. 3. North barrel vault and lunette of the Good Shepherd. This is the view above the entrance to the Mausoleum. Ornamental motifs pictured include the fruiting garland, gold grape vine against blue ground, double running wave border, and loose ribbon.

Fig. 4. West barrel vault and lunette of Stags at Water. Motifs pictured include curling acanthus (lunette) and curling grape (vault), two of the little prophets, the wreathed Christological monogram, T-meander border, florets of window frame.

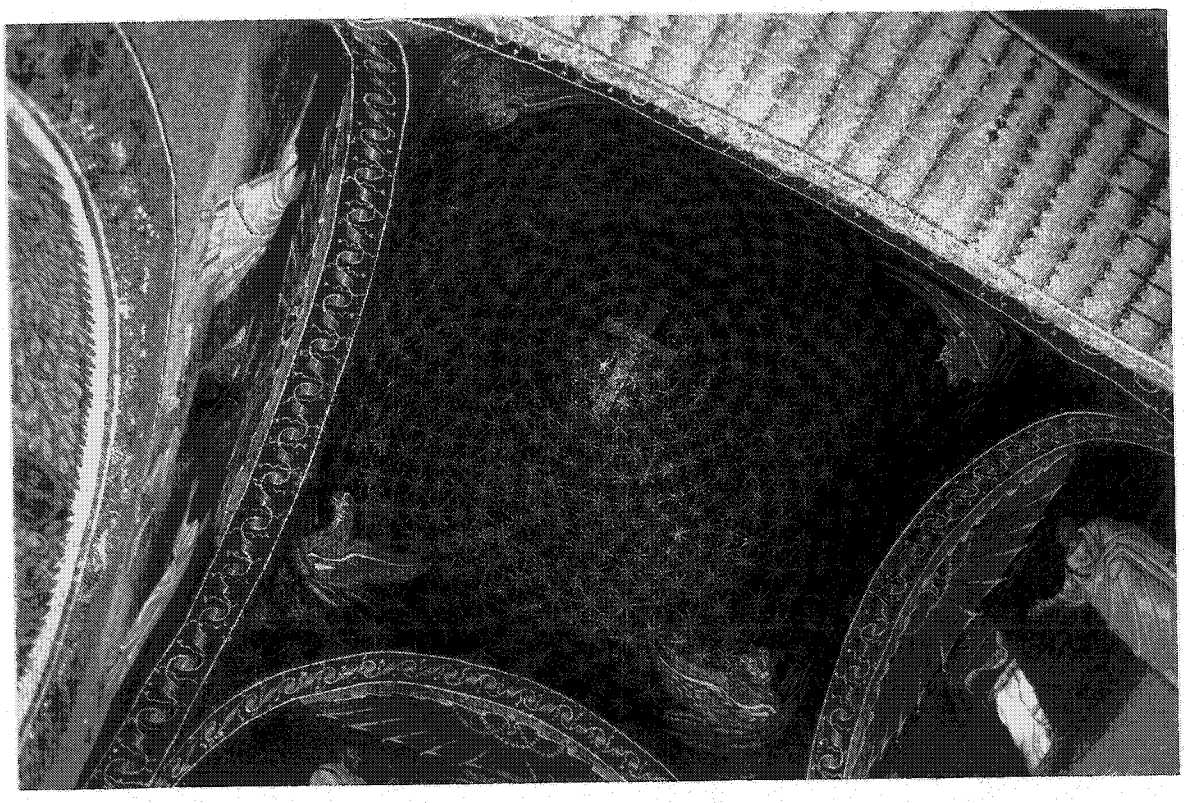

Fig. 5. Dome. Motifs pictured include stars, cross, Four Living Creatures, loose ribbons.

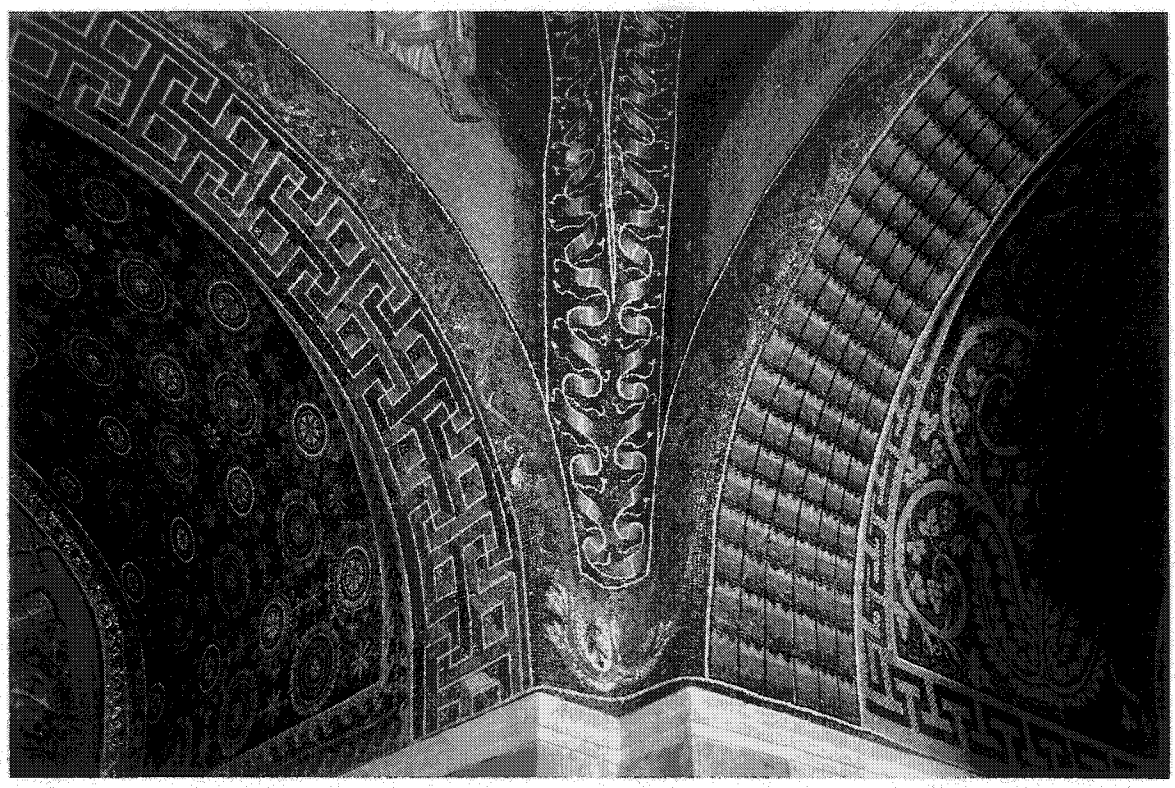

Fig. 6. Southwest corner. Motifs pictured include emerald rainbow, gold grape vine against blue ground, loose ribbon, three-dimensional polychrome meander, double running wave border (south vault), and T-meander border (west vault).

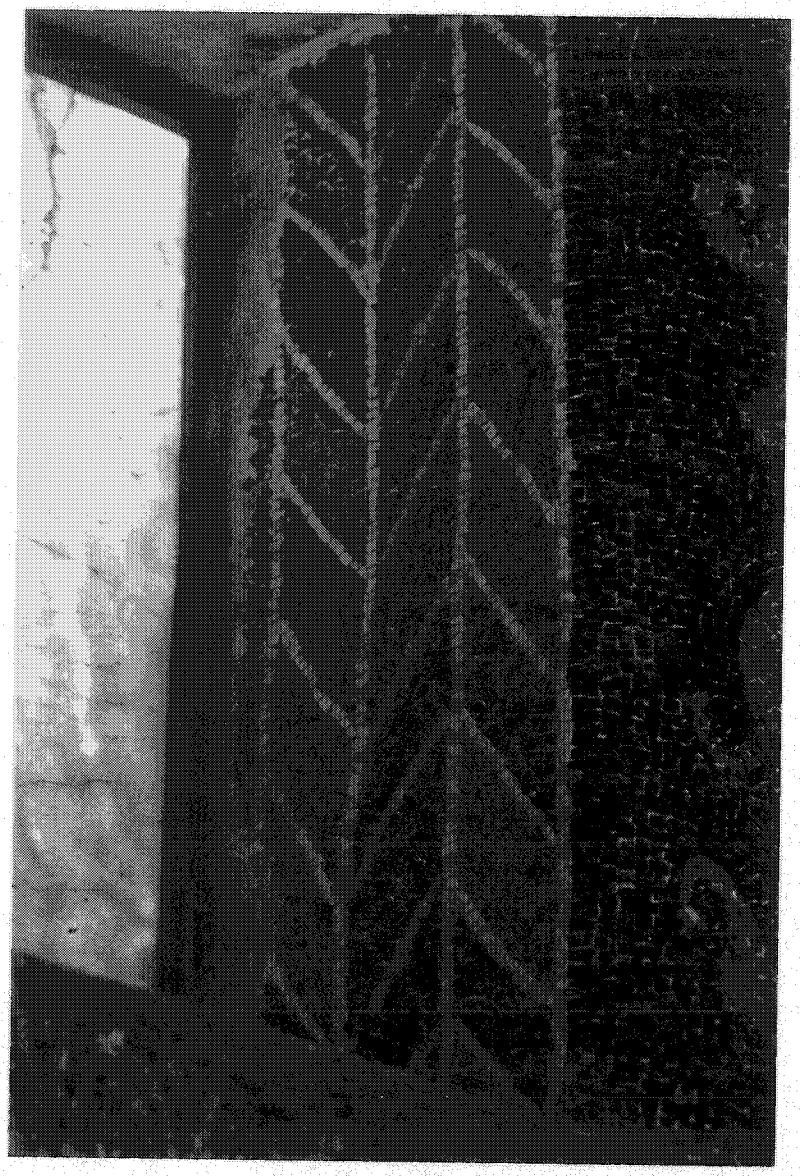

Fig. 7. Chevron/zig-zag pattern of lower window frame, east side (southeast portion of frame). This pattern is found in the Mausoleum only on this window frame.

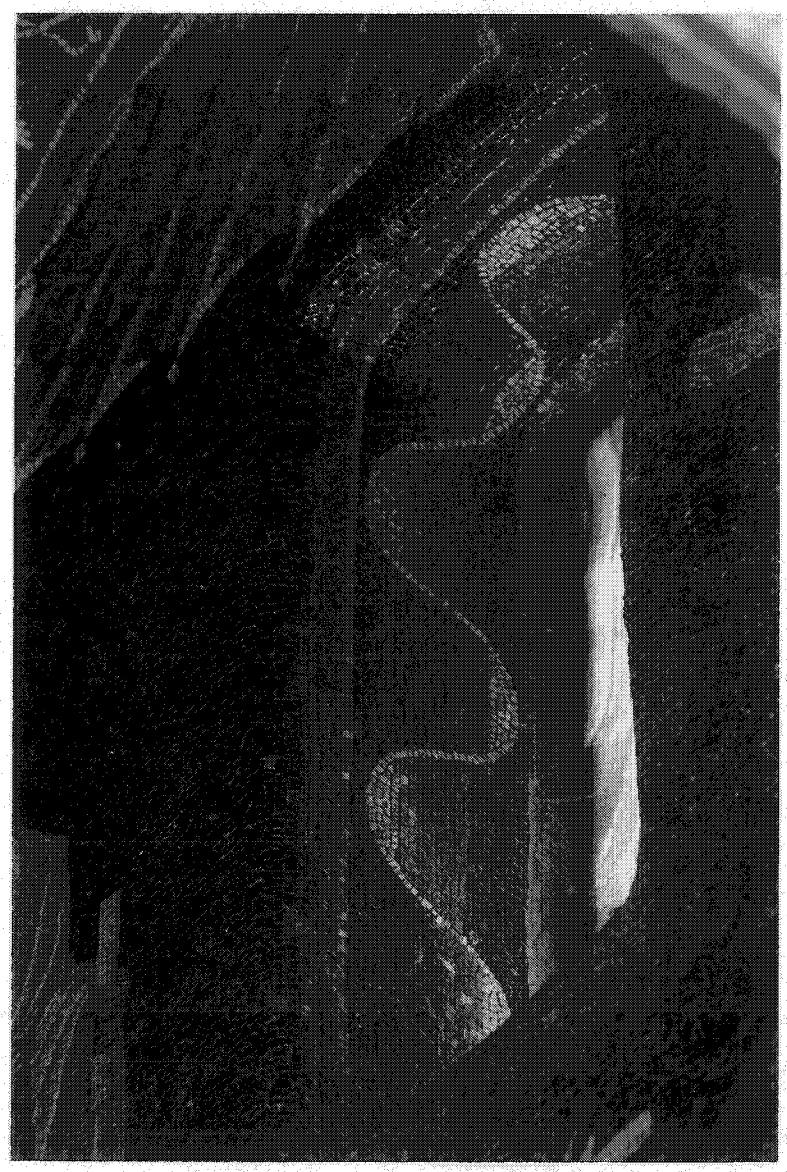

Fig. 8. Ribbon wave of upper window frame, west side (southwest portion of frame)

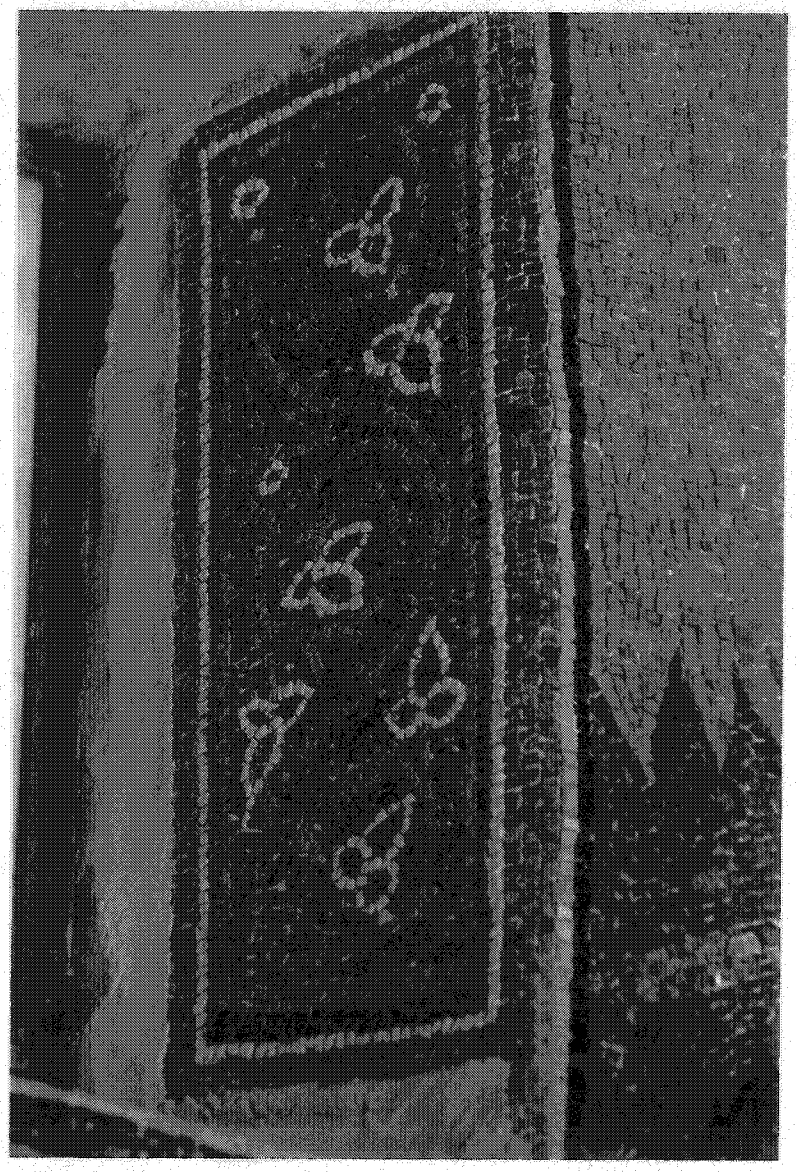

Fig. 9. Florets of lower window frame, south side (southwest portion of frame). This pattern is found in the window frame of the west side as well.

Fig. 10. East barrel vault (north side of vault). Motifs pictured include acanthus sprouting grape vines, one of the little prophets, swastika meander border.

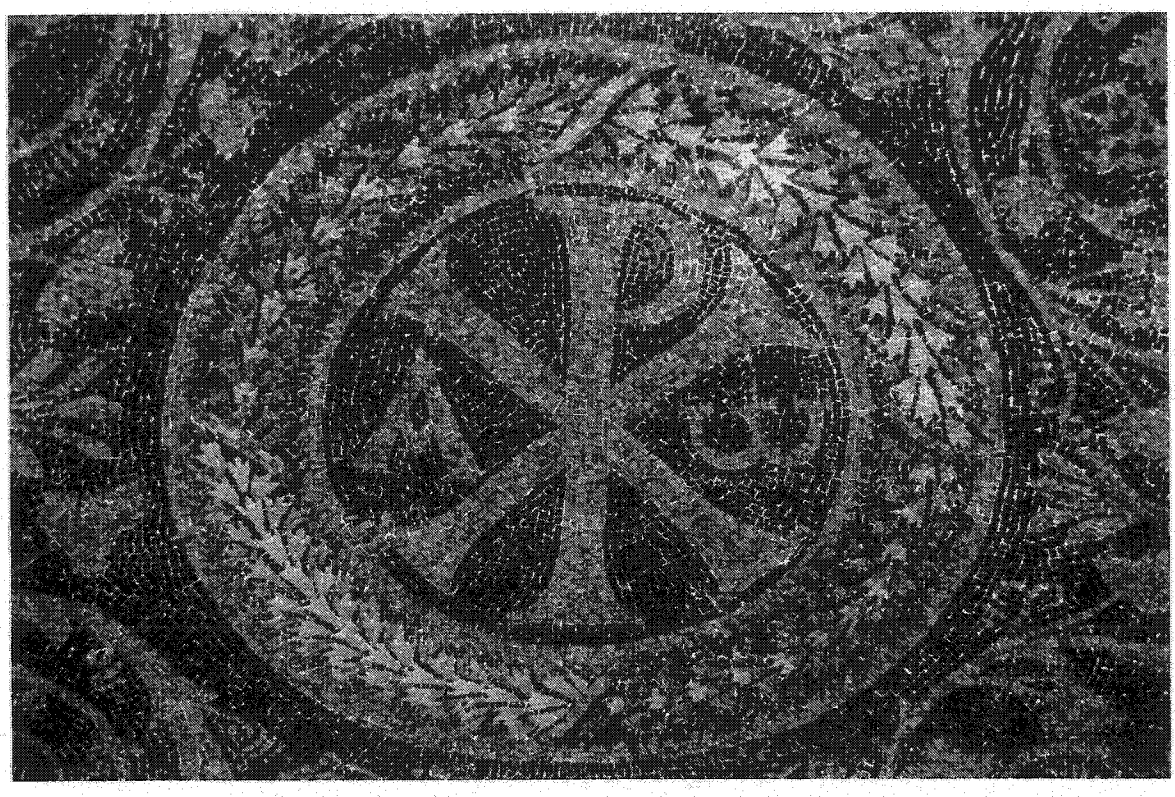

Fig. 11. Apex of east barrel vault. Christological monogram with alpha and omega, framed by wreath.

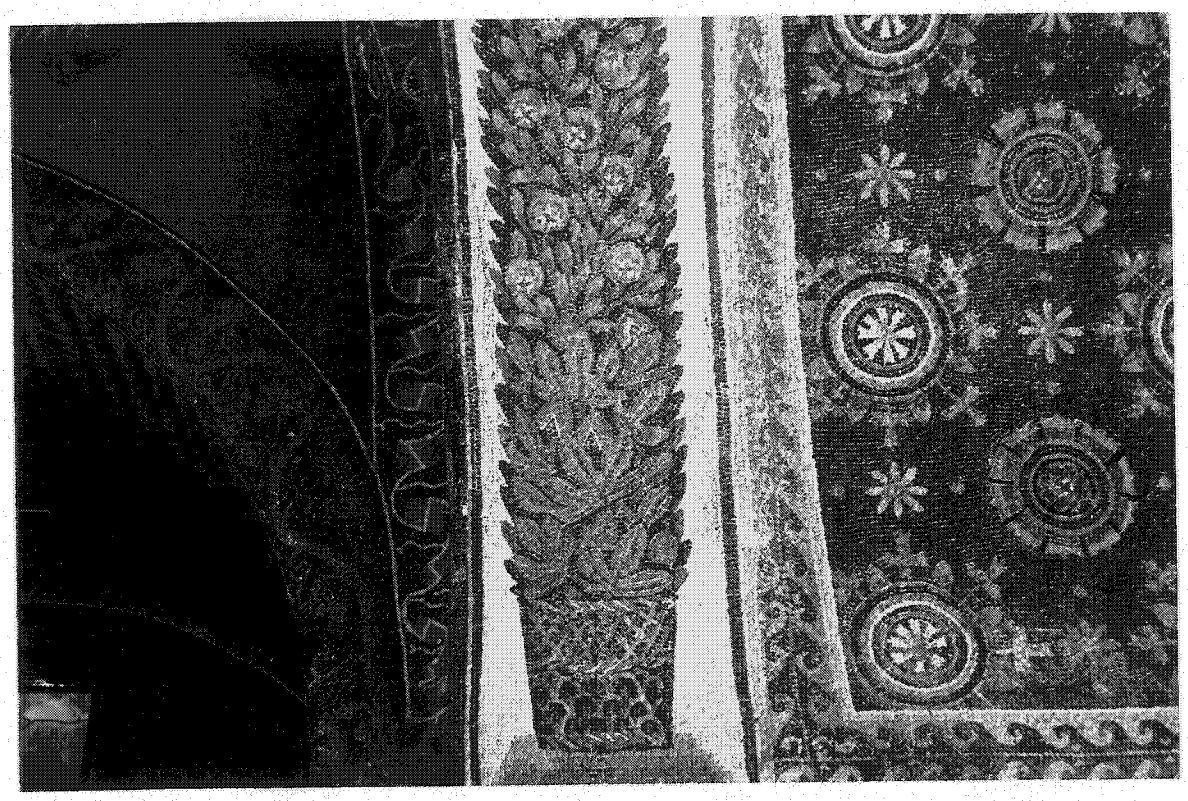

Fig. 12. Soffit of north barrel vault (west side of soffit). One end of the fruiting garland in baskets. Ornamental motifs pictured include flowers of north barrel vault, double running wave border, loose ribbon, and gold grape vine against blue ground.

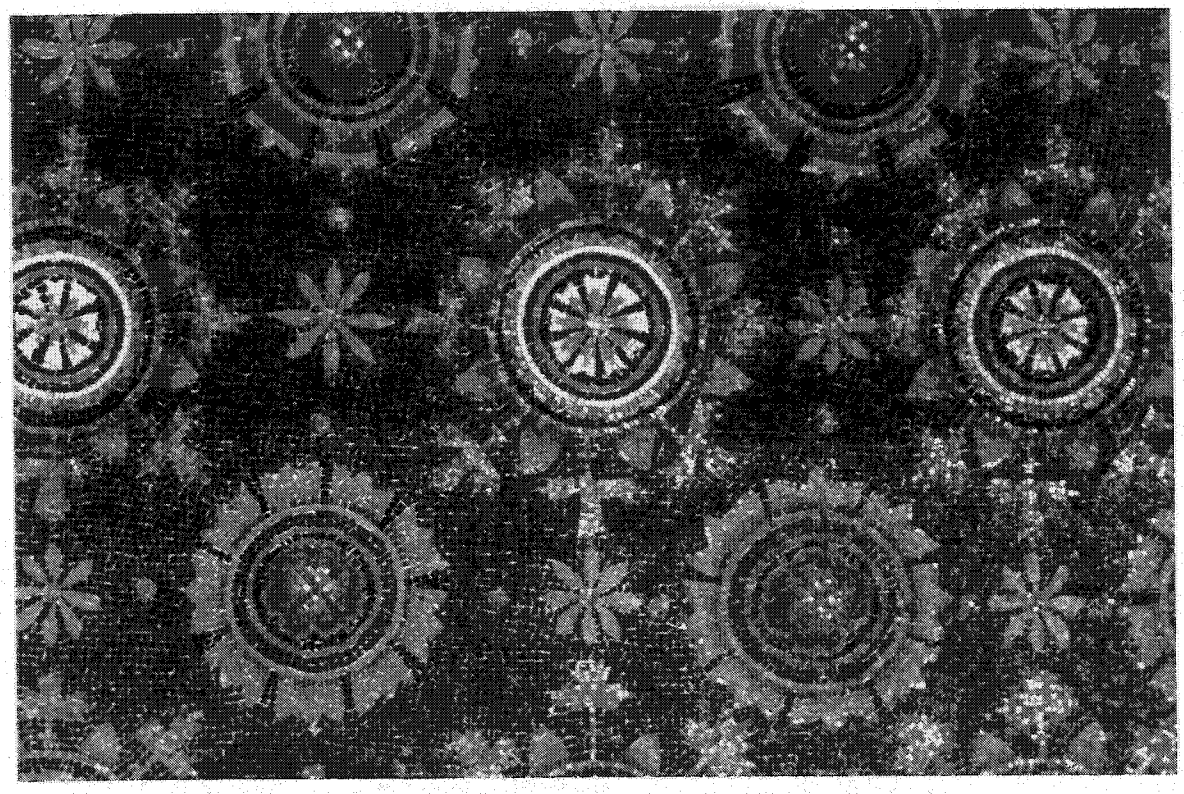

Fig. 13. North barrel vault, detail. Flower motifs pictured include: eight-petalled light blue marguerites with gold centers; white and blue flowers with squared-off petals; and rosettes formed by a green cross dividing a quatrefoil of heart-shaped petals of red, orange, and yellow.

Fig. 14. Palatium mosaic, Sant'Apollinare Nuovo, Ravenna. The use of the repeat pattern on the curtains in the doorways of the palace probably indicates drawloom silks. The rosette motif used here is similar to the motif seen in the north and south barrel vaults of the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia.

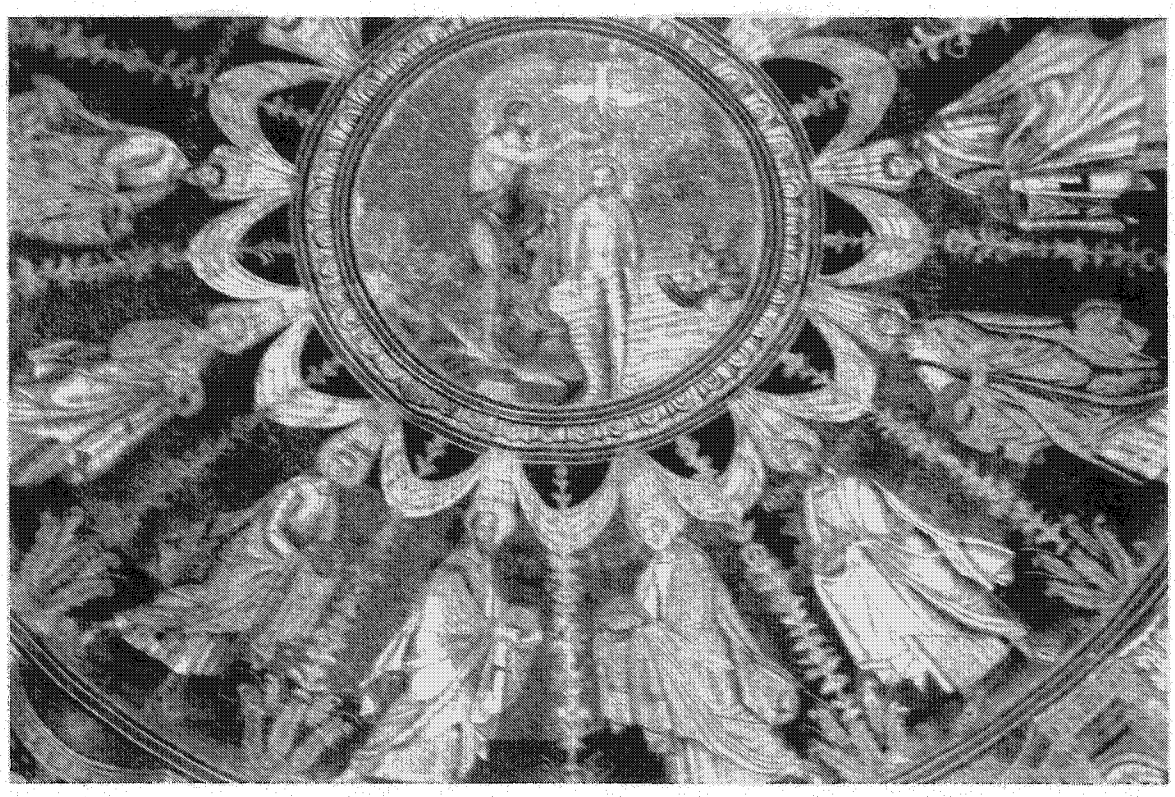

Fig. 15. Dome, Orthodox Baptistery, Ravenna. Note the use of canopies suggesting memoria over the head of each apostle.

Regina Kammer
414 44th Street
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April 3, 2000

Opera di Religione della Diocesi di Ravenna
1, P.Zza Arcivescovado
48100 Ravenna, Italy
fax: 00390544212905

To whom it may concern,

I am a graduate student at San Jose State University in California. My thesis involves looking at imperial imagery of the 5th-6th centuries, focusing on the mosaics of the Galla Placidia Mausoleum.

I will be in Ravenna from May 22nd to June 3rd, 2000 (excluding the weekend of May 27-28). I am requesting permission to extensively photograph the mosaics of the Galla Placidia Mausoleum, using a tripod, but not a flash. I would also like permission to photograph the mosaics of other monuments of the 5th-6th centuries.

Please let me know if I may photograph the interiors of the Ravenna monuments especially the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia. You can respond via fax, email, or post. Information is given above.

Thank you very much. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,
Regina Kammer

OPERA DI RELIGIONE
DELLA
DIOCESI DI RAVENNA

Prot. n°288/00/U.A. Ravenna, 5th April 2000

SUBJECT: photographic shots inside diocesan monuments.

Miss Regina Kammer
414 44th Street
Oakland
California 94609
USA

With reference to Your request dated 3rd April 2000, we grant the authorization to execute some photographic shots inside the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia, subject to agreement of the following terms:

a) delivery of copy of each utilized photo and a copy of the thesis;
b) free copyright;
c) suitable insurance for possible damages to people or things; we request copy of Your insurance policy and also an attestation of Your University;
d) the shoted images will be used only according to the history of the monuments and to their christian-religious sense;
e) these images are granted to be used only for the purposes declared in Your request, because they always belong to the Diocese of Ravenna-Cervia, sole owner of the monuments; each not authorized reproduction is forbidden.

Please, find enclose a contract form to fill where You see the crosses; our authorization is subordinate to the return of this form, undersigned and stamped for acceptance.

Best regards.

The Director
(Mons. Guido Marchetti)

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Piazza Arcivescovado, 1

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P.S. - Nel caso in cui il presente contratto venga registrato, le spese sono divise fra i contraenti.